

## Protesters against Iraq policy arrested outside White House

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fifteen people were arrested outside the White House Tuesday after protesting U.S. military action against Iraq and the U.N. sanctions imposed on that country. Most will be charged with violating the federal code for demonstrations by blocking a sidewalk, U.S. Park Police spokeswoman Valerie Fernandez said. Three of the demonstrators will be charged with destruction of government property after pouring a red substance on the sidewalk, Fernandez said. The demonstrators said the red liquid was dye. Carrying a sign that said, "The Rubble of Baghdad," the demonstrators lay on the sidewalk outside the White House among bricks and small pieces of wood. Other demonstrators stood nearby and chanted "Iraqi children are dying, lift the sanctions now."

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## Iraqi FM leaves Yemen

SANAA (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Said Al-Sahhaf left Sanaa Tuesday after talks with Yemeni leaders on efforts to convene an Arab summit, the official SABA news agency reported. The agency did not say where Sahhaf was headed. The Iraqi minister held talks with a host of Yemeni leaders, including President Ali Abdullah Saleh, during his three-day visit. Yemen has spearheaded calls for a full Arab summit to discuss the U.S. and British air strikes on Iraq this month, but the drive has been strongly opposed by the Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf states. Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid announced Monday that an Arab foreign ministers' meeting scheduled to take place in Cairo on Wednesday had been postponed until Jan. 24 because of objections from the Gulf states.

## American charged with channelling money to Hamas

BET EL (AP) — An Israeli military court on Tuesday charged a Palestinian American businessman with funneling money to the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. The court said the money went to Adel Awadallah, a top Hamas fugitive and mastermind of suicide bombings in Israel. Awadallah was killed in an Israeli commando raid in September. The defendant, Jamil Sarsour, denied any connection to Hamas. "I only made a small contribution to the family (of Awadallah), that's all I did," Sarsour, a resident of the West Bank town of Ramallah, said on Israel army radio.

## Eiffel Tower gets record 6 million visitors in 1998

PARIS (AP) — A record 6 million people visited the Eiffel Tower this year, and most were foreigners, tower officials announced Tuesday. The Eiffel Tower, France's most popular monument, drew twice as many visitors as the Empire State Building in New York and the Tower of Tokyo, both of which attracted about three million visitors. About 70 per cent of the tower's visitors were non-French, including 13 per cent from North America, officials said. Last year 5.7 million visited the century-old Eiffel Tower.

## Iranian pigeon lovers may be jailed — newspaper

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranians who keep pigeons as pets will face prison terms in the northeastern city of Mashhad, where an overabundance of the birds has turned them into pests, the paper Qods reported Tuesday. Police in Mashhad, an important Shiite pilgrimage centre, "will crack down on this excessive enthusiasm for pigeons and all persons found in possession of, or raising or letting pigeons fly will face prison terms of between six months and three years," it added. The paper quoted a senior police official as saying police are cracking down on pigeon raising following "repeated complaints by people from a number of districts in Mashhad."

## King leaves hospital, says test results better than expected Regent tells Jordanians King Hussein 'fully recovered'

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday told Jordanians that His Majesty King Hussein "has fully recovered from his illness" and has left hospital to convalesce in Washington and London before returning to Jordan soon. Quoting a letter to the nation sent by King Hussein, the Crown Prince said that "results of the tests (conducted on His Majesty in the past few days) are better than the doctors had expected."

Jubilant and visibly moved, Prince Hassan told Jordanian and Arab television viewers that "a few days of recuperation will pass before he (the King) arrives in Jordan."

After the Regent broke the news of the King's total recovery after completing

chemotherapy treatment at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, Jordan Television anchorman Bashur Jarrar told viewers that His Majesty's private plane had just landed at Andrew's Air Force Base in Washington. "We will first depart for Washington D.C., where we will stay for a few days before leaving for London, and then, God willing, for Amman, to be in the dear homeland with my dear people and family," the King told the Regent in the letter. King Hussein was hospitalised on July 14 for treatment of cancer of the lymph glands. After undergoing six sessions of chemotherapy treatment the King was declared free of cancer but was given a transplant from his own bone marrow as a precaution.

Following is the full text of the Regent's address to the nation: In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate. Dear Brothers and Family in beloved Jordan, Dear Brothers in the greater Arab homeland, Dear Friends all over the world, Peace be upon you, and God's Mercy and Blessing I break to you the joyous news that His Majesty King Hussein, the King of hearts and minds, my dear and beloved brother Al Hussein Ben Talal, may God keep him victorious, has fully recovered from his illness. Doctors at Mayo Clinic have given permission for him to leave the hospital after having successfully completed his

treatment. As you listen to my words now, His Majesty King Hussein would have left the hospital on board his aircraft, beginning his journey to the homeland and the Jordanian family whom he loves and who loves him. A few days of recuperation will pass before he arrives in Jordan. Today, I received from His Majesty a Royal message which he has asked me to share with you so that we would all join in our feelings of happiness, and together pray to God thanking Him for His mercy and blessings. My beloved brother says in the message: "Greetings of love, longing and appreciation."

(Continued on page 7)



## Iraq says it is defying allied-patrolled no-fly zones

### Agencies

A DEFIANT Iraq said Tuesday that its aircraft are flying in the no-fly zones patrolled by U.S. and British warplanes and its anti-aircraft batteries remain ready to fire on allied planes. The statement comes only a day after U.S. warplanes opened fire on an Iraqi anti-aircraft position in the northern no-fly zone, killing four Iraqi soldiers. Washington said the planes attacked after Iraq shot missiles at the aircraft. Iraq's latest move appears to be aimed at building support among Arabs who angrily protested mid-December's U.S.-British airstrikes — but whose governments did little to back Iraq's demands for lifting eight-year-old U.N. sanctions on the country.

Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan voiced Iraq's latest defiance when asked in an interview with Associated Press Television News if Iraq was flying aircraft in the no-fly zones. "We are doing it right now," he replied. "Iraqi planes in effect are flying in a normal manner in Iraqi airspace," he added. Ramadan did not specify whether the aircraft were military or civilian, but almost all of Iraq's passenger aircraft are either out of the country or unusable. All aircraft in Iraq are owned by the government. U.S. and British military officials expressed scepticism about Ramadan's assertion that Iraqi planes took to the air. In Washington, Col. Richard Bridges said there were no immediate reports of

Iraqi aircraft in northern and southern no-fly zones. "We will continue to enforce the no-fly zones," said Lt. Col. Stephen Campbell. "Nothing has changed." A spokesman for the British Defence Ministry — who spoke on customary condition of anonymity — also reported no Iraqi air activity and added Britain was ready to take action "should the conditions of the no-fly zones be breached." In Washington, the United States released video tape on Tuesday of its clash with Iraqi forces in the northern Iraqi "no-fly zone." The Pentagon released video tape showing the exchange of fire between Iraqi forces and U.S. fighter jets in the most hostile clash since Operation Desert Fox ended nine days ago.

"Splash, splash," said one voice on the tape after plumes of smoke could be seen billowing from what the Pentagon said was an Iraqi target. "Nice shot," said another voice. Before leaving the area, another voice can be heard saying, "Six bombs hit the target area." Iraq has insisted that U.S. pilots fired first while Washington says it was the other way round and that U.S. fighters were attacked and then hit back. A U.S. Defence Department spokesman said bad weather had forced British and U.S. aircraft that monitor the northern no-fly zone to cancel flights on Tuesday. "But they will continue to fly missions and patrol the northern (Iraqi) no-fly zone as the president said yesterday," he added.

On Monday, President Bill Clinton said the U.S. attack on the Iraqi missile battery was appropriate and that the United States would continue to enforce no-fly zones in the north and south of Iraq. Aircraft were still flying over the southern no-fly zone, which stretches from the border line with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan to the 33rd parallel just south of Baghdad. The northern no-fly zone is above the 36th parallel. "We have had no violations (by Iraq) reported today in the southern no-fly zone," said a Defence Department spokesman. National Security Council spokesman David Leavy said U.S. determination to enforce the no-fly zones remained strong.

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## Four British hostages killed in Yemen rescue

SANAA (R) — Four British hostages were killed and three other Westerners injured on Tuesday when Yemeni security forces stormed kidnappers' holding 16 tourists, a Yemeni official said. "The operation resulted in the death of four Britons, two women and two men. Three hostages were injured: one American woman, a British man and an Australian man," the official told Reuters. The Yemeni official said nine of the freed hostages and two bodies had arrived at a hotel in Aden, and the others were on their way to the southern port city. The official said it was the first time hostages had been killed in Yemen, one of the Arab World's poorest nations, and the first case of troops carrying out a rescue there. He said troops stormed the tribesmen's stronghold after reports that they had killed two of their captives. "The operation started after abductors started killing hostages... They killed two, and then our forces stormed them to prevent an escalation of the situation and the killing of more hostages," he said. He said three of the kidnappers were killed and three were wounded.

Tribesmen often armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles and traditional curved daggers have abducted more than 100 foreigners, including several diplomats and oil workers, since 1992 but most have been released unharmed. The official said the surviving kidnappers, who seized the Westerners on Monday, were arrested. He gave no further details. Britain's ambassador in the capital Sanaa, Victor Henderson, was meeting Yemen's interior minister to try to find out what happened, the Foreign Office in London said. "We have been informed that there have been casualties and that these may have included fatalities," said a Foreign Office spokesman. He said British officials were trying to establish the facts and contact relatives of the kidnapped tourists. In the past, Yemeni troops have shelled the strongholds of tribesmen to put pressure on them to free their hostages. A Yemeni official said earlier on Tuesday that the tribesmen who kidnapped the tourists were Islamists demanding the release of a jailed colleague.

(Continued on page 7)

## Iraq's oil exports continue despite crisis

BAGHDAD (R) — The United Nations said that Iraq's exports under an oil-for-food deal with the U.N. were continuing despite a military confrontation between Iraq and the United States. "In the week from Dec. 19 to 25, Iraq exported 17.6 million barrels of oil in 13 loadings from the port of Ceyhan in Turkey and loading platform of Mina-al-Bakr in southern Iraq," said a U.N. report released to reporters on Tuesday. Under a fifth phase of the oil pact, Iraq is allowed to sell up to \$5.2 billion worth of oil over six months to buy food and medicines to help offset the suffering of Iraqis reeling under sweeping U.N. sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990

invasion of Kuwait. The new phase began on Dec. 26. "Due to the state of Iraq's oil industry and the current low price of oil it is expected Iraq's revenues during the phase will be less than \$3 billion," the report, issued by Office of Iraq Programme in New York, said. The report also said that during the same week some 13 contracts worth \$4.5 million to import oil industry spare parts and equipment were approved by the U.N. sanctions committee on Iraq. "The total number of contracts approved so far is 238 for \$133,600,395," the report added. The Security Council authorised Iraq in June 1998 to import up to \$300 million

worth of spare parts and equipment to repair its dilapidated oil industry. The report said the United Nations oil overseers had approved a further eight contracts for the sale of Iraqi oil and sent two of them to the sanctions committee for consideration. "This brings the total oil sales contracts approved to 58 for 224.2 million barrels of oil," it said. Iraq's Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh denied on Monday reports that Iraq would curtail the so-called "oil-for-food" deal with the United Nations and that it would ask U.N. relief staff to leave the country. "This information is not correct," Saleh told reporters.

"The [U.N.] observers can stay in Iraq as long as there is an oil-for-food programme," he added. Iraq and the U.S. are locked in confrontation over two no-fly zones in north and south of the country. Iraq says it does not recognise them and vowed it would shoot at U.S. and British planes patrolling Iraqi skies. Britain and the U.S. have threatened to shoot back. Washington and London concluded on December 20 a four-day military campaign against Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction. Iraq said the campaign failed to weaken it and it increased President Saddam Hussein's grip on power.

## Israel threatens to close Gaza airport

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel has threatened to close down the Palestinian-run Gaza airport over a "security violation," an Israeli official said Tuesday, a move that could further undermine the already fragile peace process. Palestinian airport workers refused to allow Israeli security officials to check the identity of passengers who arrived on an Egyptian plane Sunday afternoon, most of whom worked for the Palestinian National Authority, according to Civilian Airport Authority Director Nir Yarkoni. "The Transportation Minister asked me to tell the Palestinians that if this continues, we won't allow the airport operate," he told The Associated Press. Yarkoni said he conveyed the message in a letter sent Monday to chairman of the Palestinian Civil Aviation Authority Brig. Gen. Fawez Zeidan. An Israeli foreign ministry statement said: "Israel cannot accept the landing of aircraft... if the Palestinian Authority does not permit the full security examination as set forth in the agreement concerning the operation of the airport."

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## Sharon does not rule out bid for prime minister

TEL AVIV (AP) — In a new blow to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his closest political ally, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, said he has not ruled out running for the premier's post. Parliament's Law Committee on Tuesday approved May 17 as the date for new elections, more than a year ahead of schedule. Netanyahu faces a growing field of challengers, including members of his own Likud Party who either seek to wrest the party's nomination from him or plan to run on their own slate. With five candidates already in the race and popular former armed forces chief of staff

Amnon Shahak expected to announce his bid next week, it is unlikely the elections will be determined in the first round. If no candidate wins more than 50 per cent, a runoff will be held June 1. In what looked like his first campaign stop, Netanyahu on Tuesday played at the Western Wall and struck a theme that helped him win in 1996 — a pledge to keep Jerusalem united. At the time, Netanyahu accused incumbent Prime Minister Shimon Peres of making too many concessions to the Palestinians who hope to set up a future capital in Arab east Jerusalem, the sector Israel occupied in the 1967 Arab-

Israeli war. Netanyahu's campaign team coin the slogan "Peres will divide Jerusalem," which was credited with helping the opposition leader narrowly defeat Peres. At the Wall on Tuesday, Netanyahu said Jews have been struggling for centuries to regain control over Jerusalem and keep the city united. "This is very much the struggle we are engaged in now," he said. Sharon's acknowledgement on Monday evening that he was considering a bid for prime minister came as a surprise. Only on Sunday, he had told Likud's Central Committee that he did "not want to be prime minister." Less than 24

hours later, he said on a TV talk show that under certain circumstances, he might enter the race. "There is a difference between 'I don't want to be prime minister' and running under special circumstances," Sharon said. There was speculation he could enter the race if Netanyahu's popularity drops or key leaders abandon the Likud party. Sharon, a popular hawk and the most experienced minister in Netanyahu's cabinet, did not say whether he would challenge Netanyahu for Likud Party leadership in January primaries or form his own slate if he decides to run.

## Jordan closely following Iraq situation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Information Nasser Judeh on Tuesday said Jordan is closely following up on the latest developments in the region in the aftermath of the recent U.S.-British airstrikes on Iraq. Speaking to reporters following a regular cabinet session, Judeh reiterated Jordan's position saying, "We are watching the recent escalation and airstrikes against Iraq with great concern. We are concerned over further aggravation, which will lead to more damage to Iraq," Judeh added. "We want to avert the region such attacks which have led to the suffering of the Iraqi people over all those years." He said that Jordan has called for an objective dialogue and to deal with the crisis through diplomatic means away from the use of force. "These means should be different from those already used, which led to the suffering of the Iraqi people," he noted.

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## Turkey's ex-premier Ciller won't join new government

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's former prime minister, Tanis Ciller, head of the conservative True Path Party (DYP), has refused to join a new government, prime minister-designate Yilmaz Erez said Tuesday. Erez told journalists after a brief meeting with Ciller: "Mrs. Ciller has categorically refused to join the new government. I am trying to form and has urged me to abandon my efforts."

"I wanted the DYP to join the next government coalition, but I see that it's not possible," Erez said. "However, I hope Mrs. Ciller changes her mind." Turkey has been without government since parliament toppled Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz on Nov. 25 for alleged links with organized crime.

President Suleyman Demirel asked Erez to form a government after previous attempts failed.

Ciller and Erez have had bad relations in the past. Although elected to parliament on DYP's ticket in December 1995, Erez quit the party in 1997 after feuding with Ciller. Ciller, who wields 99 seats in the 550-seat parliament, has been hostile to the idea of Erez as prime minister from the start and is understood to want the job again herself.

However her refusal is not likely to prevent the formation of a new government if Erez obtains the support of the other main parties. He has also held talks with Deniz Baykal, head of the left-of-centre Popular Republican Party (CHP),

which has 55 seats.

Baykal says he will await the outcome of further talks with other party leaders next week before deciding whether to support Erez.

Erez said Monday he was confident he could form a government after meeting the head of a leading Islamist party and receiving pledges of support from two other leaders. "I am confident that I can form a government which would have the backing of parliament with as many votes as possible," Erez said after talks with the Virtue Party's leader, Recai Kutan. "I am not looking for a simple coalition but a government of national unity with the participation of all the groups present in parliament." Kutan also said his party, the

largest group in parliament with 144 seats, would make its position known after the second meeting.

Outgoing premier Mesut Yilmaz on Monday pledged the backing of his right-leaning Motherland Party, which has 136 seats, while Bulent Ecevit likewise promised the support of his Democratic Left party, which has 61 seats.

Erez, an independent deputy who holds the post of industry and commerce minister, said he would hold a second round of talks with party leaders, which would probably take place next week.

He is seeking to form the 56th government in the 75-year history of the Turkish republic, and the fourth since elections in 1995.

## 'Israel study costs of Golan withdrawal'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli government began a secret study four years ago of the amount of compensation it would be forced to dole out in the event of a withdrawal from the Golan Heights, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

The study, codenamed "Mango," was started by the government of then-prime minister Yitzhak Rabin with the assistance of a leader of settlers living in the Golan, which was occupied in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Yediot Aharonot said.

Yediot said the study continued under the governments of Shimon Peres and current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It said a figure of around 10 billion shekels (\$2.4 billion) was arrived at for the value of homes, land and businesses owned by Israelis on the Golan, which Israel illegally annexed in 1981.

A Golan settler leader, Yehuda Wollman, confirmed that he was aware of the existence of the study.

"I took part in this operation because I thought it would be better to do so discreetly myself rather than leave it to lawyers," he told Israeli radio.

Yediot said treasury department officials meet regularly to update the estimates contained in the study and that the latest meeting took place in a Tel Aviv hotel just three months ago.

## Charity banquets at mosques feed the poor, needy during Ramadan

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Hundreds of charity banquets have sprung up at the Kingdom's major mosques to feed Jordan's poor and needy during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The mercy banquets, known as "Mawad Al Rahman" reflect the spirit of Ramadan, which encourages acts of mercy and charity.

Outside several mosques, poor Jordanians, many of them families, waited to get to the tables to eat.

"Thank God we have these banquets, otherwise I would have died from hunger," said Salem Hayyan, a father of 12 who earns JD 100 a month from selling fruits.

His son, Ahmad, said he had been waiting eagerly for these banquets. "Thank God for Ramadan, at least we are eating something good instead of the bread, tomatoes and onions that we are forced to eat every day because we do not have much money."

The banquets offer Ramadan specials such as chicken, yogurt, bread, meat, chicken, rice, fruits, and sweets donated by philanthropists and charities.

Most of the banquets are

sponsored by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, which invites restaurants to take part in food tenders to supply these banquets throughout the duration of Ramadan.

In parallel, dozens of non-governmental charities, many of them chaired by Royal family members, are organising similar functions for Jordan's orphans and the poor. Her Royal Highness Princess Basma is spearheading a major annual campaign to collect money, food and other donations.

"These banquets ensure the spirit of Ramadan," said the ministry's Assistant Secretary General Hamdi Murad told the Jordan Times. "From an Islamic point of view, Mawad Al Rahman is one of the oldest methods in Islam to express the importance of family links, brotherhood and social solidarity," Murad said. "They also help preserve the dignity of needy people, regardless of their race, religion, colour, by keeping them away from begging."

The ministry's Zakat (alms for the poor) Fund, which launched the idea of these banquets years ago, also offers

cloth, stationary and money to needy Jordanians. It relies on alms, one of the five basic pillars of Islam, and on donations from wealthier Muslims.

According to official figures, over one-third of Jordan's 4.2 million people live below the poverty line. Unemployment is officially put at 15 per cent and unofficially at between 22 and 27 per cent.

The concept of Mawad Al Rahman could be expanded by turning them into year-around Takayas (Muslim-style hospices offering free food for the poor) across the country, officials said. The ministry is also considering plans to distribute special cards in the future to enable needy citizens to benefit from the banquets.

But for now, the ministry follows set guidelines to ensure food and aid reaches the most needy through special committees that study cases of impoverished families, regardless of their religion or nationality.

The Mawad Al Rahman menu is comprehensive in terms of the meal's variety and nutritional value. The ministry's tenders include inviting several well-known restaurants in all governorates to prepare the meals.

## Palestinian journalists continue boycott

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian journalists in Gaza embarked Tuesday on the 10th day of a boycott of the Palestinian National Authority in protest at the arrest of eight of their colleagues by police.

The Palestinian journalists union has refused to cover the normal business of the Palestinian government since the eight were arrested

on Dec. 18 after they covered a demonstration in Gaza organized in support of Iraq. The journalists were released within hours of their detention but their union remains concerned at the activities of the police.

"The detention of journalists in the criminal investigation department is never acceptable," Tawfiq Abu Khawda, a member of the journalists

union, told AFP. "The fact that the security measures are continuing along with the arbitrariness of the arrests has pushed us to continue with this protest," Abu Khawda said. "What we are demanding is respect for the law on printed matter and publications despite our reservations about provisions within the law," he said.

## Sudan opposition calls for national democracy congress

KHARTOUM (R) — Leaders of opposition parties in Sudan called on Tuesday for a national conference to draft a constitution and system of government representing all Sudanese.

They told a news conference they sent a memorandum calling for the conference to Islamist President Omar Hassan Al Bashir.

"You have enabled one single political thought of a minority political party to impose its ideology and influence on the people with disastrous consequences for the country and you know this fact

more than any one else," the memorandum said.

Bashir, whose strict Muslim rule is resisted by Christian and animist peoples who populate southern Sudan, banned political parties after seizing power in a 1989 coup.

On Jan. 1, Sudan is to reintroduce a multi-party system under a new constitution which took effect in June, but opposition parties say they will not register under the new law.

They say a real return to democracy requires formation of a national unity government and the convening of a national constitutional conference at

which all Sudanese would be represented. Bashir's government has rejected the proposal.

The memo was signed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which groups the Umma party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Union of Sudanese African Parties, the Communist Party, trade unions and other opposition figures.

Those at the news conference, attended by ambassadors of France, Germany and Netherlands, spoke of increasing resistance.

"Since we do not know who is actually governing Sudan,

we will give them time, but they should know that what cannot be undone by the hands can be undone by the teeth," said Abdul Rahman Nudgalla, an Umma party member and former minister.

Former vice president Abel Alier said: "If there was doubt when the government took over as to the separation of the south, now there is no doubt, particularly if the regime continues."

The Islamist government is fighting a war of more than 15 years with rebels who want greater autonomy for the south.

## Muslim Brotherhood uses Ramadan banquet as show of strength

CAIRO (AP) — The Muslim Brotherhood is outwitted and many of its leaders are behind bars. But Egypt's largest fundamentalist group can still gather hundreds of people at a rally attended even by members of Egypt's ruling political party.

The brotherhood, a secretive band that helped create the modern Islamic revival, drew the crowd Monday to its annual "iftar" banquet, the breaking of the fast during the holy month of Ramadan when Muslims do not eat or drink during daylight hours.

Despite the religious covering for the event, Mamoun Al Hodeiby, the deputy lead of the movement, conceded it was meant to demonstrate the brotherhood's popularity.

"This is testimony that everyone recognises that the brotherhood is not a marginal organisation but a mass movement which

enjoys the trust and confidence of all walks of life," he told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

He said the banquet's purpose was to involve the group with opposition parties and "to try to find solutions for the problems that inhibit the freedom of political activities."

The brotherhood, founded by Hassan Al Banna in Egypt in 1928, grew into a vast movement with tens of thousands of supporters in Egypt and branches throughout the Arab World. It is banned in Egypt though the group pledges it wants to achieve its goal of strict Islamic rule only through peaceful means.

It was long unofficially tolerated, but since 1995 the government has clamped down on the group, accusing it of supporting a violent campaign by Muslim militants to overthrow the secular government.

Addressing the rally Monday

in a Cairo hotel, the group's leader, Mustafa Mashout, called on the government to lift its ban on the movement.

His call was applauded by shouts of "Allahu Akbar," or "God is Great," by hundreds of bearded men and veiled women, the group's supporters who strictly speaking cannot legally hold political meetings.

It also received support from leading opposition figures who said the brotherhood should be accepted as a legal political party.

"The brotherhood is a national movement which has deep roots in our society," Abdul Adhim Manaf, a leader of the pan-Arab Nasserite Party, said in an interview Tuesday.

Manaf attended Monday's banquet as did — surprisingly — Hamdi Al Seyid, a senior member of President Hosni Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party.



Egyptians listen to a traditional oud player in a Cairo cafe late Monday. After sunset and once the first meal is consumed during the Muslim Holy fasting month of Ramadan, Cairo's streets and cafes are flooded with entertainment seekers, who linger later into the night (AFP photo)

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## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION  
Tel. 4773111-19  
PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"  
15:30 Children's Programme — Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left  
16:00 French Documentary  
16:30 (Ch. 2 links with Ch.1)  
17:00 French programme  
18:15 Omar Ben Abdul Aziz  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 Words of Wisdom  
19:30 News headlines  
19:35 Comedy — 2 Point 4 Children  
20:00 Islam in a Changing World  
20:30 Drama — NYPD Blue  
21:15 The Great Moments of Science and Technology  
21:30 Faces and Places  
22:00 News in English  
23:10 Cover Story  
23:10 The Album Show  
23:59 End of T.X.

### PRAYER TIMES

05:08 Fajr  
06:30 Sunrise/Duha  
11:38 Dhuhur  
14:23 Asr  
16:46 Maghreb  
18:08 Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Swefieh, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel.

4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811  
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751  
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897  
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932  
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440  
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138  
Church of Presentation, Sweifieh Tel. 5920146  
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757  
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190  
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679  
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052  
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331  
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology  
Relative cold weather condi-

tions will prevail with skies partly cloudy. Scattered showers are expected in the northern parts of the Kingdom and winds becoming westerly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman .....04/14  
Aqaba .....09/20  
Deserts .....03/16  
Jordan Valley .....10/21

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 14, Aqaba 20 Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent, Aqaba 55 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun .....03/07  
Jerash .....07/14  
Um Qays .....02/14  
Madaba .....03/11  
Petra .....03/12  
Dead Sea .....10/21

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Hanna Mansour .....4750197  
Dr. Afif Shakri .....4898863  
Dr. Khalil Ramadan .....538723

Dr. Nidal Al Dabieh .....5837195  
AMMAN:  
Firas Pharmacy .....5661912  
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730  
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004  
Ruko Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:  
Dr. Issam Al Salih .....021246858  
Fou'ad Pharmacy 021275360

ZARQA:  
Dr. Raib Atallah .....09994434  
Palestine Pharmacy 09983562

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....4637111  
Civil Defence Department 5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....4617101  
Blood Bank .....4775121  
Highway Police .....5343402  
Traffic police .....4896390  
Public Security Dept. ....4630321  
Hotel Complaints .....5605800  
Price Complaints .....5661176  
Water & Sewage Complaints 489467  
Amman Municipality Complaints .....4787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121  
Overseas Calls .....0132  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs .....5661101  
Jordan Television .....4773111  
Radio Jordan .....4774111  
Water Authority .....5680100  
J. Electricity Authority 5815615  
Electric Power Co. ....4636381  
RJ Flight Information 44-53200  
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....5921199  
The Islamic Abdli .....5666131/7  
Husseini Medical Centre 5858556  
Luzmila .....4630195  
Khalidi Maternity .....4642816  
Akileh Maternity .....4642412  
Jabal Amman Maternity .....4642362  
Malhas, J. Amman. ....4636140  
Palestine, Shneisani .....5607071  
Shneisani Hospital .....5607431  
Jordan Hospital .....5607530  
University Hospital .....5353444  
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279  
Al-Ahli, Abdali .....56641646  
Italian, Al-Muhasreen 4777101/3  
Al-Bashir .....4775111/26  
Army, Marka .....4891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital .....5157100  
Amal Hospital .....5607155  
Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 07:30 .....09983323  
Zarqa National Hospital 08:35 .....09900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital .....09986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital .....09990990

IRBID:  
Princess Basma Hospital .....021275555  
Roman Catholic Hospital .....021272275  
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital .....0217101372, 0217103101  
Rosary Sisters Hospital .....0217102831, 0217102011  
Specialty Hospital .....0217103100

AQABA:  
Princess Haya Hospital 031204111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
07:30 .....Damascus (RJ)  
08:35 .....Jeddah (RJ)  
09:15 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
09:55 .....Larnaca (RJ)

15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
16:50 .....Istanbul (RJ)  
17:30 .....Madrid, Geneva (RJ)  
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)  
18:00 .....Brussels, Paris (RJ)  
18:00 .....London, Berlin (RJ)  
18:10 .....Rome (RJ)  
18:45 .....Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)  
23:10 .....Beirut (RJ)  
23:59 .....Cairo (RJ)

### Other Flights

09:30 .....Cairo (MS)  
10:30 .....Jeddah (SV)  
12:20 .....Kuwait (KU)  
13:10 .....Tunis (TU)  
13:20 .....Bahrain (GF)  
14:05 .....Rome (AZ)  
15:05 .....Vienna (OS)  
15:30 .....Algiers (AH)  
18:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)  
18:40 .....Beirut (ME)  
19:15 .....Frankfurt (LH)  
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)  
01:25 .....Athens (OA)  
02:00 .....Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
09:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
10:10 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)  
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)  
18:30 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
22:50 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES  
06:50 .....Larnaca (RJ)  
09:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
09:45 .....Rome (RJ)  
11:00 .....Istanbul (RJ)  
12:15 .....London (RJ)  
16:30 .....Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)  
19:30 .....Colombo (RJ)  
19:35 .....Beirut (RJ)  
20:00 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)  
20:15 .....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)  
20:15 .....Bombay (RJ)  
20:25 .....Cairo (RJ)  
20:35 .....New Delhi (RJ)  
21:00 .....Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)  
21:15 .....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)  
22:45 .....Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights  
06:30 .....Larnaca (CY)  
07:25 Damascus, London (BA)  
07:25 .....Paris (AF)  
10:30 .....Cairo (MS)  
12:00 .....Medina, Jeddah (SV)  
13:20 .....Kuwait (KU)  
14:10 .....Bahrain (GF)  
14:10 .....Tunis (TU)  
15:30 .....Vienna (OS)  
15:30 .....Rome (AZ)  
16:30 .....Sharjah (AH)  
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)  
00:35 .....Amsterdam (KL)  
02:45 .....Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
16:00 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)





His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday joins worshippers in the south for maghreb prayers. Prince Hassan hosted an iftar banquet in honour of dignitaries from the southern governorates of Aqaba, Maan, Tafleeh and Karak. The banquet was attended by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, President of the Senate Zeid Rifai and Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Hadi Majali, Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani, members of the Royal family, His Majesty King Hussein's advisors and the governors of Aqaba, Maan, Tafleeh and Karak (photo by Boghos)

## Mulki heads for Iraq Sunday to renew oil deal

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki plans to visit Iraq next Sunday to renew Jordan's annual oil deal with its eastern neighbour which remains Amman's sole supplier of cheap crude and other oil derivatives.

"I will go to Iraq on Sunday in order to renew the annual oil deal and to discuss issues of common interest," he told the Jordan Times Tuesday.

His visit, planned for Dec. 20, was postponed following recent U.S.-British air strikes on Iraq.

The Kingdom imports from Iraq about 11,500 tonnes of oil per day and Mulki said he will

press for an increase of between 4 to 5 per cent to meet annual consumption demand.

Mulki, who will be accompanied by the general manager of the Jordan National Petroleum Company, is expected to hold talks with Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rashid on ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the areas of oil and gas exploration.

The four-day U.S.-British air strikes were suspended on Dec. 19.

To guard against possible shortages because of the latest attack, Jordan signed an agreement to import 60,000 tonnes of diesel oil from the international market and another one for 40,000 tonnes

of liquefied gas.

Since the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq has been exporting more than 75,000 barrels of oil per day to the Kingdom, part of which is charged at market prices and rest at undisclosed concessionary terms.

Jordan's oil purchases from Iraq are exempt from U.N. sanctions, which ban Baghdad from exporting oil as punishment for its 1990 invasion to Kuwait, apart from limited quantities to purchase food and medicine.

Iraq and Jordan started talks in October this year in Baghdad on construction of a \$350 million oil export pipeline linking the two neighbours.

## Global peace messenger arrives in Jordan

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An American of Cuban origin walking around the globe to promote children's rights and world peace has arrived in Amman, part of his 45,000-kilometre tour launched in California two years ago.

Danny Garcia, 53, will spend five days in Jordan for talks with representatives of children organisations and the Jordanian Olympic Committee before moving on to Jerusalem.

Garcia, who plans to visit young children being treated at Jordanian hospitals, on Tuesday met with Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sa'at Al Hassan, who hailed his humanitarian endeavour and wished him good luck.

Garcia told the Jordan Times he might visit Iraq.

"I'm walking for children and for world peace and I am very sorry about the situation in Iraq," he said.

Washington and London suspended their four-day punitive air strikes on Iraq on Dec. 20.

Garcia, who founded the worldwide "Children of our World and Cease-Fire" campaigns, said he walked around 100 kilometres a day as part of his efforts to "draw popular attention to children issues, to promote peace and to collect money".

Garcia, who already covered 12,000 kilometres on foot, is also carrying a message of peace to world leader and organisations he plans to encounter along the way.

His journey, which already has taken him to Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, will end in Sydney by the year 2000 to coincide with the opening of Olympic games there.

He is currently contacting musicians around the world to organise simultaneous concerts on Sept. 15, 2000.

Around 350 international organisations are sponsoring his journey.

## Mulki says temporary shortage of domestic gas cylinders over

### Many citizens queue to buy vital gas supplies for cooking and heating

By Caroline Faraj and Munther Murjan

AMMAN — The government Tuesday assured anxious Jordanians that a temporary shortage of gas cylinders used for cooking and heating was over after renewed supplies began pouring in from Iraq.

The Jordan Petroleum Refinery decided to ration gas consumption last week following a sudden halt in supplies caused by recent U.S.-British air strikes on Baghdad, one of Amman's main suppliers of fuel oil and domestic gas.

Though the refinery insisted it had cut down overall daily gas supplies by five per cent, many Jordanians said they felt the pinch, worsened by cold weather conditions and increased demand on domestic cooking during the Holy Fasting Month of Ramadan.

Ramadan began on December 19, a day before Washington and London said they were suspending their four-day strikes on Iraq.

"We hope the problem of gas supplies, which falls within the responsibility of the refinery, is solved as of Tuesday," Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki told the Jordan Times.

Mulki was speaking after touring the refinery and visiting gas distribution agencies in Amman, Irbid and Zarqa to assure jittery owners that the gas crisis had ended.

"We had to reduce daily supplies of domestic gas by five per cent after deliveries from Iraq of around 250 tonnes per day were suddenly halted by the air strikes," said refinery Director General Abdul Wahab Zoubi.

"The strikes also delayed for a few days the arrival of some vessels carrying liquefied gas supplies to Aqaba from Greece and other countries," he added.

Jordan's daily consumption of between 500 and 550 tonnes of liquefied gas during summer soared to 1,250 tonnes a day in winter.

Mulki said 20 trucks carrying 400 tonnes of Iraqi liquefied gas, were on their way to Amman after he



A man and his son Tuesday carry a gas cylinder in a narrow alley near a main street close to the Khilda area. People with their cars were surrounding a gas cylinders van begging for supplies following a temporary shortage caused by recent U.S.-British air strikes on Iraq — one of Jordan's main suppliers of fuel oil and domestic gas (photo by Yusef Allan)

contacted Iraqi Minister of Oil Amer Rashid late on Monday to seek urgent supplies following the shortage.

A vessel carrying 3,400 tonnes of liquefied gas, part of 40,000 tonnes ordered from Greece, was expected to dock at the Red Sea port of Aqaba on Thursday, Mulki said.

Many Jordanians said they were shocked by the refinery's sudden and unpublicised decision to reduce daily deliveries of gas days after assuring them that the Kingdom had enough strategic supplies of domestic gas to last for 90 days.

Mulki indicated that current supplies of domestic gas were enough for six days only.

"Hence, the refinery took an administrative decision to ration consumption of gas cylinders to safeguard available levels of supplies which caused this problem," he said.

"I am going to look into this decision and I might take appropriate measures, if needed," added Mulki.

Mulki said he was also considering plans to allow the private sector to import liquefied gas next year after studying "all legal aspects of such a move to

avoid a possible repetition of such situations [shortages]."

The refinery has monopoly over supplies of gas and crude oil.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Jordanians queued outside gas distribution agencies around Jordan to buy cylinders at a fixed price of JD2,200 per unit. Others put empty cylinders in their cars and drove around town looking for vans distributing gas for higher prices.

Some complained of being exploited by several vendors who were charging them JD2.5 per cylinder.

In a narrow alley near a main street near Khilda, more than 100 men, women and children surrounded a gas van begging for supplies.

"I am ready to pay anything," said Mohammad Jaser, an architect who complained he had been looking for a gas cylinder for the past three days.

"There is nothing more humiliating than being unable to cook or to heat up food, especially during Ramadan, when one has to fast from dawn to dusk," he told the Jordan Times.

Gas distributors across the Kingdom said they had been receiving around 70

per cent of actual daily needs of 100,000 gas cylinders.

"We felt the pinch on Friday as we only got half of what we normally receive," said Mazin Najjar, owner of Fajloje gas distribution agency.

"On Monday, I received 15 cylinders, while yesterday, I got hold of 30, which I sold even before they were downloaded," he said, interrupted by seven angry residents seeking gas cylinders.

A dozen housewives, making ends meet to feed their large families and keep them warm, sounded downbeat.

One said she was preparing for the worse. "If I run out of gas, I will go back to using coal and wood for cooking and heating," said Halimeh Ahmad, a mother of six.

Government employee Ahmad Hussein, who earns JD150 a month, said he was searching for old-fashioned kerosene stoves to replace his two gas heaters.

"My wife is doing most of her cooking on a kerosene stove I bought last week exactly as my mother used to manage in the 1960s," he said. "And I am searching for another one if you can help me."

## Prosecutor extends arrest warrant for Sa'd, 13 others

By Mohammed Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The prosecutor general has extended for another 14 days an arrest warrant for Ali Faid Sa'd, former general manager of the debt-ridden Jordan Tobacco and Cigarettes company, pending further investigations into an alleged JD15 million embezzlement, his lawyer said on Tuesday.

Sa'd was arrested earlier this month along with 13 other employees from the firm in connection with alleged embezzlement.

The prosecutor general also ordered the extension of the arrest of the other employees, held at Jweidah jail, for a similar period.

So far around 30 witnesses have been questioned in connection with the alleged fraud.

Saleh Jeirudi, Sa'd lawyer, said no charges have been pressed against any of the 14 men.

Sa'd, who was earlier refused bail, is still in hospital recovering from heart problems he suffered at the Jweidah prison last week.

Jeirudi said it was not clear when the investigation would be finalised and when the case would be referred to court.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry earlier in September dissolved the company's board of directors and appointed a new management comprised of representatives from the private and public sectors to run the firm.

The new general director of the company, Mufleh Aqal, is a senior member of the Arab Bank, the company's major

creditor, while the board members come from other creditors as well as the government.

The ministry's decision came after the Arab Bank filed a lawsuit against the financially-troubled company for defaulting on a JD5.5 million payment.

According to company records, the 67-year-old company is indebtedness to the local banks stands at around JD22 million.

Sa'd is still recovering at the army-run heart centre of the Royal Medical Centre, Jeirudi said.

Jweidah jail officials rushed Sa'd to the state-run Al Bushir Hospital after suffering from heart problems.

Sa'd was later moved to the Royal Medical Services "for better observation," Jeirudi said.

## News in Brief

### Majali meets Finnish parliamentarians

AMMAN (Petra) — Abdul Hadi Majali, speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Tuesday received a Finnish parliamentary delegation and discussed with them the latest Middle East developments and bilateral ties. Majali briefed the delegation on Jordan's stand vis-a-vis these developments, especially on the Iraqi crisis. He stressed the Kingdom's principled stand towards attaining a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the region. The two sides also reiterated the need for bolstering bilateral ties to serve the peoples of both countries.

### Arafat meets Jordan's envoy in Gaza

GAZA (Petra) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat Tuesday received Ziyad Majali, head of Jordan's Representative Office in Gaza and inquired about His Majesty King Hussein's health. President Arafat also conveyed his greetings to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. Both sides discussed the political situation in the

region and several bilateral issues.

### Workshop looks into information strategy

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan Tuesday called for adopting a popular and civilised perspective to deal with environmental issues to reflect the country's development. Addressing the opening session of a workshop on strategies of environmental information held at the Dead Sea Hotel, Kreishan stressed the importance of a comprehensive data base for decision makers.

### PM mourns former minister Shami

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh Tuesday mourned the death of Jaafar Shami, former minister of public works, who passed away on Tuesday. Shami held senior government posts, including minister of public works, senator, member of the National Consultative Council and president of the Jordan Engineers Association.

## Pharmacists plan to send medicine to Iraq

### Judeh says planned Iraqi meeting with unions violated diplomatic rules

By Mohammed Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The government said on Tuesday it had banned a meeting between heads of Jordan's 14 professional associations and Iraqi Parliament Speaker Saoudun Hammadi to discuss the latest strike on Iraq.

"This was a joint decision made by the executive and legislative authorities as both of us tend not to violate diplomatic traditions that are implemented all over the world," he added.

The Iraqi parliamentary delegation, angered by words of pro-Iraqi sympathy during the one-day APU meeting which ended on Sunday, told Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and other participants the team did not seek pity but a concrete Arab stand to ease their plight.

Hassan Jaber, President of the association's executive committee, criticised the Interior Ministry's move to ban the meeting with Hammadi and the eight-member Iraqi parliamentary delegation.

He said the unions only wanted to listen to "briefing

on the effects of the air strikes on Iraq and the Iraqi people."

Abdul Rahim Issa, President of the Pharmacists Association, slammed as a "mistake" the decision relayed to the associations by Amman Governor Talaat Nawayseh.

"There is nothing wrong in meeting with our Iraqi brethren," he told the Jordan Times.

"We always host guests at the association and we have never asked the government for permission," Issa added.

Iraqi diplomats and deputies could not be immediately reached for comment.

In a related development, Issa said the Pharmacists Association intended to ship drugs and medical equipment to Iraq in defiance of U.N. sanctions.

The union, whose members own 1,600 pharmacies and 12 drug factories, will next Monday send trucks to Iraq carrying large shipments, he added.

However, Issa said that Jordanian authorities may prevent the trucks from crossing the border into Iraq. The vehicles may also be turned back

by U.N. monitors enforcing sanctions on the Iraqi side of the border with Jordan.

"We will not wait for approval from the United Nations and if this happens (that they will not allow us in), the trucks will turn back," he said.

Issa said the association had asked all drug stores, factories and medical equipment stores in Jordan to contribute to the shipment.

United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait ban it from importing or exporting most goods.

Humanitarian items such as food and medicine are allowed in, but every sale has to be approved by a U.N. sanctions committee. The committee's job is to ensure that exports to Iraq cannot be used in its weapons industries.

"We have taken this action to support and back the Iraqi people who have suffered the unjust embargo for eight years," Issa added.

He said the association was planning to sell the drugs in Iraq at low prices and was in

contact with the Iraqi side to inform them about their decision.

However, Iraqi embassy officials in Amman said they had not been contacted by the union.

Issa urged other business associations in Jordan and in Arab countries to defy the embargo.

"Everybody in Jordan and in the Arab World must do the same because it is the only way to salvage the Iraqi people from their plight," he said.

Last Monday, the associations began a boycott of American and British drugs, medical equipment and other goods to protest against the air strikes on Iraq from Dec. 16 to Dec. 19.

The air strikes on Iraq followed a complaint by U.N. weapons inspectors that Iraq is hindering their mission to dismantle the country's weapons of mass destruction.

Until the U.N. inspectors certify that Iraq is free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and long-range missiles, the United Nations cannot lift the trade sanctions.

## What's going on

### OLD PERFORMANCE

\*Old performance at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 PM (daily until Dec. 31).

### EXHIBITIONS

\*Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture and abstract (plastic)

art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Jan. 25.

\*Exhibition of Nabataean silver jewelry at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Sagra Street, until Jan. 15 (Tel. 5699141/2).

\*"The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Feb. 1.

\*The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2, until Jan. 28).



## Khmer leaders pledge peace, meet premier

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Shielded from trial by Prime Minister Hun Sen, two top Khmer Rouge leaders came to Phnom Penh Tuesday and said it was time to forget their brutal rule in the 1970s, which left as many as 2 million people dead.

Hun Sen greeted Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, part of the inner circle of late Khmer Rouge chief Pol Pot, with handshakes and smiles after cementing their defection — in essence, a surrender — with public pledges not to try them for genocide.

They were flown by helicopter from Pailin, a former rebel stronghold, to Hun Sen's residence on a military base outside the capital. After five hours of talks, they checked in at the Phnom Penh hotel where they were booked for the night.

"This is the end of the Khmer Rouge," Khieu Samphan told a mob of waiting reporters. "I discussed with his excellency Hun Sen that we must forget the past in order to reach national reconciliation, peace and stability so we can rebuild our country."

Neither looked well after months on the run while Khmer Rouge territory fell under government control. Nuon Chea, 71, walked with

a cane. Khieu Samphan, 67, needed help up the stairs.

Khieu Samphan's normally white hair was dyed black in an apparent attempt at disguise.

A truckload of military police stood guard outside the hotel.

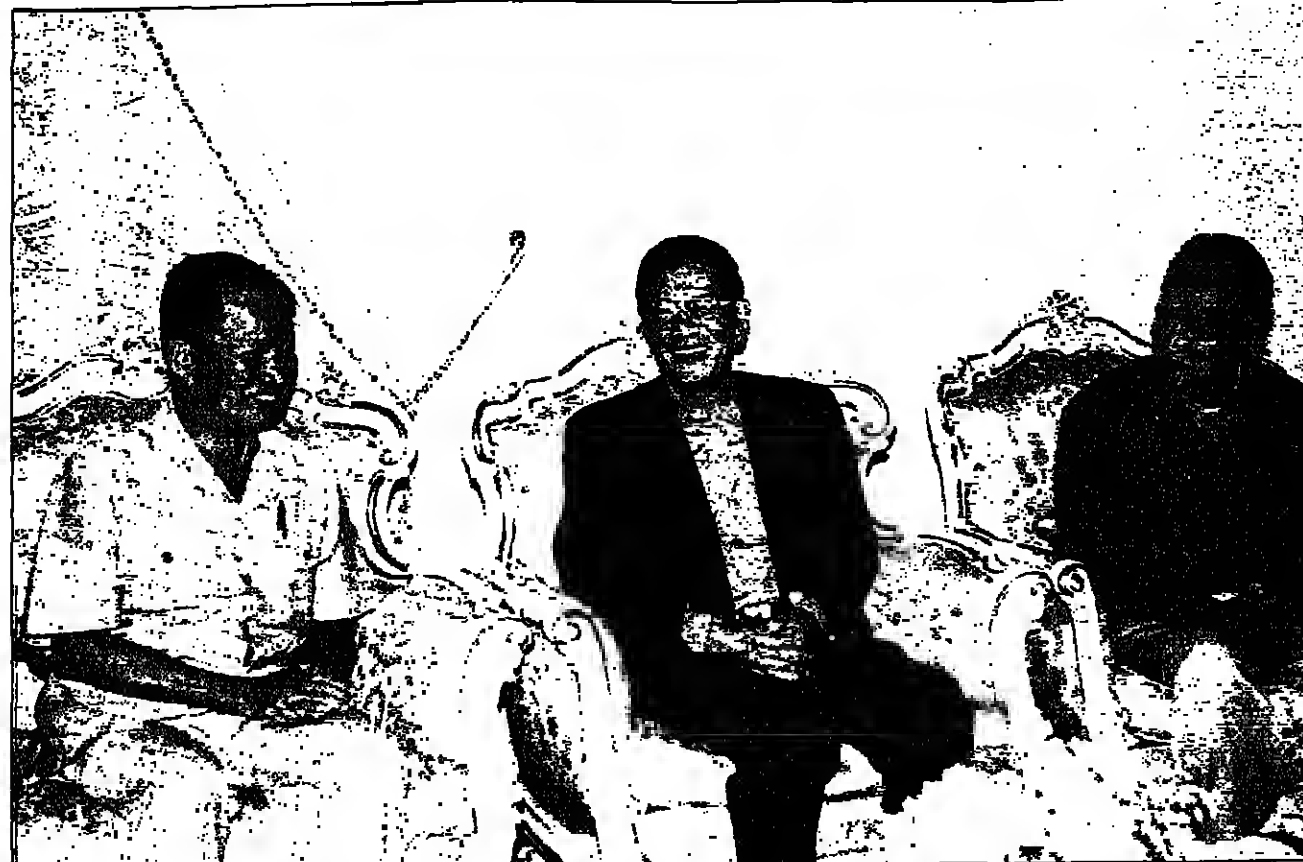
Reporters asked Khieu Samphan if he feared becoming the first Khmer Rouge leader to be put on trial for crimes against humanity.

"It is up to the Cambodian people to pronounce on this matter," Khieu Samphan said.

Nuon Chea added: "We're glad to make a contribution to national reconciliation." They later paid a call on Prince Norodom Ranariddh, president of the National Assembly and son of King Norodom Sihanouk. Hun Sen says that both have approved of the defections.

Speaking to the British Broadcasting Corp. from Sweden, Thomas Hammarberg, U.N. Special Representative for Human Rights in Cambodia, said it would be "extremely sad" if the pair were not charged and tried for crimes against humanity.

In the meeting with Hun Sen, they posed for pictures with Ieng Sary, a Khmer Rouge leader pardoned in 1996 for his role in genocide in exchange for making



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen (centre) chats with former Khmer Rouge leaders Khieu Samphan (left) and Nuon Chea during a meeting at his residence in Takhmau town, 15 kilometres south of Phnom Penh. Two top Khmer Rouge leaders, long wanted for genocide, arrived by military helicopter at a base outside the capital to meet Hun Sen, who has ruled out putting them on trial (AP photo)

peace and leading thousands of guerrillas out of a state-mated civil war.

Leading members of the Cambodian People's Party — led by people who, like Hun Sen, were once Khmer Rouge cadres before fleeing bloody purges in the late 1970s — joined the meeting.

In exchange for ending their part in the war — all but over for more than a year anyway — Hun Sen said Monday he would not try Khieu Samphan or Nuon Chea, slamming the door on international pressure to bring them before a tribunal overseas or a Cambodian

court.

"If we bring them to trial, it will not benefit the nation, it will only mean a return to civil war," Hun Sen told the cabinet. "We should dig a hole and bury the past and look toward the future."

Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea have been sheltered for several days in Pailin, an ex-rebel stronghold nominally under government control but run by Ieng Sary.

It was Nuon Chea's first visit to the capital since the Khmer Rouge were overthrown in 1979 by a Vietnamese invasion. Khieu Samphan came to Phnom Penh in 1991 after a peace

treaty — later broken by the Khmer Rouge — was signed. He was stoned by a Hun Sen-controlled mob.

In the past two years, granting pardons to Khmer Rouge leaders ended their war and gave Cambodia new hope of rebuilding. But now, calls are rising from Cambodians, the United States and other countries for someone to be held accountable.

The Maoist revolutionaries won a civil war in 1975 and forced Cambodians into slave labour camps. About one person in five perished from overwork, starvation, disease and executions.

Khieu Samphan was the nominal leader, though he is generally viewed as a front-man for those with real power. Nuon Chea was seen as Pol Pot's second-in-command and chief political theorist.

Former members of the inner circle who have defected tend to place all blame on Pol Pot, who died in April of a heart attack.

Khieu Samphan said he had separated "a long time ago" from the only chief-fain still at large, Ta Mok, known as "The Butcher," who is somewhere on the Thai border with perhaps 100 die-hard loyalists.

## Museveni orders arrest of army officers in Congo

KAMPALA (AFP) — Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has ordered the arrest of army officers conducting illegal business in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the New Vision daily reported Tuesday.

The state-owned newspaper said Museveni had instructed army Chief of Staff Brigadier James Kazini, the commander of Ugandan forces in the DRC, to seize any such merchandise owned by the arrested officers.

Museveni also asked for the repatriation of the officers concerned.

The move followed reports that some Ugandan troops, deployed in the DRC since Tutsi-led rebels took up arms against DRC

President Laurent Kabila's regime on Aug. 2, mainly to check incursions by Ugandan rebels battling Museveni's government, were engaged in illegal business like gold and timber trade.

"The president was bitter about the reports that our officers are engaged in illegal business and has instructed that those caught should be arrested, deported and their merchandise seized," the paper quoted a military source as saying.

The paper said that there was an influx into DRC by Ugandan traders, most of them said to be relatives of army officers, "hence speculations that the officers were directly involved in business deals."

Museveni is said to have stressed to his troops that they must maintain discipline so that they are not "misunderstood" by the DRC population, and warned them that he will personally take action against any officer found flouting army regulations.

Two months ago, a senior army officer, Brigadier Jet Mwebaze, died with five other people after a plane they were flying in to the eastern DRC town of Beni crashed on Ruwenzori mountains.

Most of the people on board the aircraft were reported to be businessmen dealing in minerals. They were also said to have been carrying more than \$1 million.

## Yeltsin pledges in newspaper letter to avoid Communist return

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin in a letter to readers of Russia's leading business daily Tuesday pledged to avoid leading the nation back towards its Communist past.

"As president I declare — there is no road back," Yeltsin wrote in an unusual letter published on the front page of Kommersant.

"The past year was not easy for any of us," Yeltsin said. "Many, including Kommersant readers, may have thought that the country was turning back. This is not so!"

Kommersant and other liberal Russian newspapers have been harshly critical of key members of Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov's economic team.

The influential paper has repeatedly accused the Communist economics czar Yury Maslyukov and Soviet-era central bank chief Viktor Gerashchenko of favouring heavy state control of the economy.

Kommersant also leaked what it said were advance copies of economic proposals from Maslyukov, many of which were dropped fol-

lowing public outrage over the reports.

Yeltsin has delegated nearly all economic decisions to Primakov's government since Russia's financial collapse in August that also brought down the liberal team put together by former Premier Sergei Kiriyenko.

But Yeltsin pledged to Kommersant that he would prevent the government adopting decisions returning Russia to its Soviet roots.

"There is no other path for Russia besides democracy," Yeltsin wrote.

## China says no more balloon overflights, for now

BEIJING (AP) — China is withholding permission for balloons to cross its airspace, after British tycoon Richard Branson and his teammates drifted off course during their failed round-the-world attempt, the foreign ministry said Tuesday.

China had earlier approved overflights by three round-the-world balloon teams, but is now suspending permission, foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said.

Asked when China might permit more overflights, he replied: "It depends. Well, you can wait for the notification."

Branson, American millionaire Steve Fossett and Per Lindstrand of Sweden were originally granted permission to cross China below 26 degrees north latitude.

However, the trio drifted further north than planned. Following diplomatic appeals from Britain, the balloonists were allowed to continue flying.

Caught in poor weather,

the team splashed down off Hawaii Friday.

Following the problems with that flight, "the Chinese side has postponed the permission of balloons flying through Chinese airspace," Zhu said.

A Swiss-based team last week postponed its round-the-world attempt because China withdrew permission.

The Swiss government is now negotiating with China to obtain clearance for the balloon, piloted by Bertrand Piccard.

Piccard's last bid also was abandoned after China refused his balloon entry, causing it to miss out on jet-stream winds needed to speed it over the Pacific.

Another attempt at the balloon record was stalled Monday by strong winds over the ReMax team's launch pad in Alice Springs, Australia.

Other teams plan take-offs from Chicago and Albuquerque, N.M.

## Who's afraid of the big bad bug?

PARIS (AFP) — The level of exposure to risk from the millennium bug, or damage caused by the non-compliance of computers to the Year 2000 Problem, varies widely according to country, industry and personal situation.

The highly computerised finance, banking, insurance and air transport industries are greatly exposed almost by definition, but have also, at least in most Western nations, long been aware of the problem and invested heavily to achieve Year 2000 compliance.

Thus holders of life insurance policies and pension plans can largely rest assured that their interests will be unharmed by the change of century, when computers using two-digit year counters may be unable to distinguish between 1900 and 2000.

Air travel too is expected to be totally safe, aviation systems having been made compliant by the June 30, 1999, deadline.

To set public fears at rest U.S. civil aviation chief Jane Garvey told Congress earlier this year that she intended to board a flight shortly before midnight on Dec. 31, 1999, and fly coast to coast.

However, other industries have failed to move smartly

to cover their risk exposure and could face serious problems. These include healthcare, semi-conductors, food processing and some government agencies. Other sectors such as telecoms, power, water and transport that depend on embedded computer systems are also well behind in their planning.

Thus supermarket groups in Europe have been alarmed to find that much of their vital equipment such as chillers and refrigerators, guaranteed Year 2000-compliant by their manufacturers, has proved to be distinctly fallible when put to the test.

Y2K compliance-monitoring organisations such as Cap Gemini and the Gartner group report progress over the past year in addressing the growing threat, but warn that much remains to be done.

The United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Australia are the best prepared countries, according to Gartner, with the rest of Western Europe about six months behind, apart from France and Germany which lag by 12 months and 8-10 months respectively.

Eastern Europe, Russia, Japan, South East Asia and much of South America are

more than a year behind.

Small businesses are significantly less well prepared than big businesses, Gartner reported in its latest survey, with four-fifths of all companies which have yet to start taking Y2K-compliance measures being small companies. Government agencies, even within the United States, have been slow to secure compliance, particularly in the health sector.

Patient administration and records are heavily dependent on date-affected programmes, and a wide range of medical devices use embedded computer chips. Thus an early alarm sounded when cancer screening programmes were found to be unable to handle recall dates set for the next century.

A recent survey of U.S. hospitals, reported by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, showed that 30 per cent of them had not even begun to address the problem.

At the individual level, the effects of the Y2K problem are likely to be limited to minor inconveniences rather than major disasters.

Transport operators will be among the most aware of potential year 2000

problems and can be expected to have done everything necessary to achieve full compliance and normal services.

Lifts which are still working on the morning of New Year's Day 2000 can be expected to continue to do so. Home computers may or not be year 2000-compliant, depending on which software they are running. Users are advised to check with suppliers, or to consult manufacturers' Internet sites where they can obtain year 2000 "patches" that will fix problems.

The owners of small businesses are also vulnerable to the Y2K problem and may need to get in touch with their computer manufacturer, although many governments have set up special programmes and are providing "action packs" to help them resolve their problems.

And although high street banks, which have spent billions of dollars on the problem, are expected to have ironed out all possible flaws by the time the century ends, the Financial Times, the businessman's bible, warns its readers that it might be "a good idea" to double-check any bank statements which span the New Year period.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Bhutto says government harassing her, asks chief justice to intervene

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto accused the government Tuesday of intimidating and harassing her and asked Chief Justice Ajmal Mian for protection. In a letter to Mian released by her party, the former premier alleged police ransacked the office of one of her lawyers at the weekend and arrested a staff member. She said her defence lawyers were being subjected to "intimidation, coercion and threats." Hundreds of police in full riot gear have been on band at each bearing of cases filed against her by the government, Bhutto said in the letter released by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). "I seek the judiciary's protection against the regime's high-handedness," she said. Bhutto is on trial, along with her jailed husband Asif Ali Zardari, for corruption. The couple denies charges of amassing wealth through kickbacks on government contracts when Bhutto ruled from 1993 until his ouster in November 1996. Bhutto was prevented Monday from leaving the country for Dubai to visit her three children studying in the Gulf state. PPP leaders and MPs condemned the action and Bhutto has petitioned the Lahore high court to quash the ban.

### China parliament OKs Macao citizenship policy

BEIJING (R) — China's parliament Tuesday approved a Macao citizenship policy which makes all ethnic Chinese born in the Portuguese-controlled territory citizens of China, the Xinhua news agency said. The Law on Nationality in the Macao Special Administrative Region denies foreign consular protection to Chinese citizens with Portuguese passports or right of residence in other foreign countries while in China or Macao, the report said. The nationality law goes into effect in December 1999, when Macao becomes a special administrative region of China after 442 years under Portuguese control. The law, approved on Tuesday by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, or parliament, sets forth the following citizenship policy for Macao's 400,000 residents: All Macao residents of Chinese descent who were born on Chinese territory, including Portuguese passports or identity cards; individuals of mixed Chinese and Portuguese descent are free to choose between Chinese and Portuguese citizenship; Chinese residents in Macao holding Portuguese passports can use the documents to travel to other countries, but will not enjoy the protection of Portuguese consulates while in China or Macao; Chinese citizens in Macao with right of residence in other countries can travel to other countries and regions with such documents but do not enjoy the protection of foreign consulates while in Macao or China.

### Anarchists in Italy kidnap baby Jesus from nativity scene

TURIN, Italy (AP) — Anarchists kidnapped the baby Jesus from a nativity scene set up by the northern city of Turin, demanding that authorities free a jailed comrade, Italian newspapers reported Tuesday. "Free Silvano now or Jesus is dead!" an anonymous note sent to La Repubblica newspaper and Italy's ANSA news service said. A photo sent with the letter showed the statue clutching the front pages of two Sunday newspapers in its wooden hands. That's a common device in ransom photos, meant to show the dates the pictures of the captive were taken. The letter was demanding the release of Silvano Pelissiero, who was arrested last spring after an alleged attempt to sabotage a high-speed train. Two colleagues arrested with Pelissiero committed suicide. The statue was stolen Sunday. Nativity scenes in Italy commonly stay up until Jan. 6, Epiphany. The man who created the scene urged that the anarchists' demand be ignored. "Sure, they've taken a symbol, but we're only talking about a piece of wood," artist Emanuele Luzzati told Corriere della Sera newspaper.

### Landslides kill 5 in Central Java

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — At least five villagers in Central Java have been killed as torrential rains in recent days triggered landslides and floods, a news report said Tuesday. Four of the dead were members of a family buried by a landslide Monday morning in Duren village in Banjarnegara regency, about 340 kilometres southeast of Jakarta. The fifth victim was a 30-year-old woman whose body was found later Monday after she was swept away by the Cironangkang river in the nearby district of Banyumas, reported the official Antara news agency. The agency said at least 3,000 houses in 18 villages and hundreds of hectares of rice fields were destroyed by flood waters which reached a height of two metres. Floods triggered by incessant rains also inundated hundreds of houses in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Antara said.

### Scorned husband demands deportation of Thai bride

LONDON (AFP) — A scorned husband has demanded the deportation of his Thai bride after spending £40,000 (\$67,000) and five years bringing her to Britain, only to be dumped after 12 weeks. Tim Canham, a petrol station manager of 42, sold his house to pay debts he built up during his legal battle to win a visa for his bride Ornsri, 23. He first met her in 1992 when she was working in a restaurant in Thailand, married her a year later and struggled until earlier this year to obtain her a visa from British authorities. But less than three months after arriving in Britain, she left him. "I feel utterly betrayed," he said. "I have no shred of love left for the girl." Sadly, it seems that immigration officers were right all along. I did not realise what I was doing or that I was being conned. "In the end she drove me to a nervous breakdown," Canham, of Southampton in southern England, said Ornsri changed from being an "attentive and loving" wife to someone who showed him no affection as soon as she arrived in England. He said he had spent £40,000 on 10 trips to Thailand to see her, for her family and on his efforts to get her a visa. His Thai wife's visa has now run out, but he does not know where she is. "If she is found I would like her to be deported," he added.

### 16 killed in road accident in India

NEW DELHI (AP) — A bus collided with a truck in western India Tuesday, killing at least 16 people and injuring 13 others, Press Trust of India news agency said. The bus passengers included some school children going for a picnic, PTI said. The collision took place near Aurangabad, 750 kilometres south of New Delhi. The injured have been hospitalised in Aurangabad. Other details were not immediately available.

Taiwanese bridegroom (L) and groom (R) are both 25.

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Taiwanese bridegroom Chang Fu-Ming, an F-16 jet fighter pilot, stands with his bride Chung Li-Fung, a Hercules C-130D pilot, and 89 other newly wed couples at a mass wedding to highlight the holiness of marriage, sponsored by the Taiwan Air Force in a Taipei restaurant Tuesday, Dec. 29, 1998. The couple are both captains and are both 25 years old (AP photo)

## OSCE-brokered ceasefire holds in tense Kosovo

PRISTINA, Serbia (R) — International monitors said a ceasefire they restored between Serb security forces and ethnic Albanian rebels was holding Tuesday.

"There are no reports of shooting or anything. We cannot really predict the future here, but I certainly hope the ceasefire will hold," Jorgen Grunnet, the spokesman for international monitors, told Reuters.

The fierce fighting, which started Thursday and went on almost unabated for four days, ended when commanders of the two sides agreed to pleas by officials from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to cease fire.

At least 15 people were killed and several wounded in the violence, the worst since a fragile peace

between Serbian security forces and the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrillas was established in October under U.S. mediation.

Grunnet said the latest violence consisted of local skirmishes. "There was no all-out war," he said.

No fresh violence has been reported since Sunday. But there were reminders of tension in the north of the province and doubts remained over the role of the hundreds of observers sent to promote a political settlement for the province.

Polish Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek, current head of the OSCE, said Sunday that if the violence worsened, the OSCE would have to reconsider the nature of its mission.

Wolfgang Petritsch, the European Union's Kosovo

envoy, said Monday that the verifiers, who now number 600 out of 2,000 who will make up the full mission, would continue to be deployed and that the mission was evolving all the time.

Serbs from the region have demanded state protection from ethnic Albanian guerrillas and asked the verifiers to help.

They said they were worried about the fate of 13 Serbs left in villages in the vicinity now controlled by the KLA.

Grunnet said the OSCE had no information about the Serbs.

Monday, heavily armed ethnic Albanian guerrillas patrolled villages in the area of the violence and said they were ready to fight if necessary.

One of the local KLA guerrillas commanders told

Reuters his men would respect the ceasefire, but said he was not prepared to make peace with the Serbs.

"I want to make it clear that the ceasefire is agreed with the OSCE observers and not with the Serbs," said the commander, known by his nom de guerre, Remi.

Serb forces which were supposed to have been withdrawn from Kosovo have been returning the province in recent days and deploying around Podujevo.

Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic signed the deal with U.S. Balkan envoy Richard Holbrooke in October to withdraw many combat forces under threat of NATO air strikes, ending a crackdown on separatism which led to 2,000 deaths and created 250,000 refugees.

## Loyalist forces lose fight for Sierra Leone town

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (AP) — Rebel forces battling to oust President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah have taken control of the central town of Makeni, defence force officers said Tuesday.

Makeni, a strategic town about 120 kilometres north-east of the capital, Freetown, was the scene of recent heavy fighting. Rebel fighters battling against defence forces from a West African coalition army known as ECOMOG succeeded in pushing ECOMOG into a "tactical retreat," according to an

ECOMOG statement.

Sierra Leone's Foreign Minister Sam Banya Monday said virtually the entire population of several thousand people fled Makeni.

The rebel Revolutionary United Front has launched a series of offensives in recent weeks to recapture ground lost to Nigerian-led ECOMOG troops earlier in the year, when the ECOMOG force ousted from power a military junta with ties to the RUF in February.

The West African intervention force has stayed on

in Sierra Leone to help defend Kabbah's elected government.

Diplomats from West Africa, the United States and Britain meeting Monday in the Ivory Coast called for more aid to help defend Sierra Leone's embattled government.

Nigeria has assumed the vast majority of responsibilities for ECOMOG, while Ghana and Guinea have also sent troops. The United States and Britain have provided logistical support for the regional task force. Rebel units, however,

claim to have closed to within 20 kilometres of the capital and have threatened to start shelling the city.

Banya said mercenaries from Liberia, Burkina Faso and the Ukraine were fighting alongside the rebels. That claim could not be independently confirmed.

"The rebels must cease fighting immediately, lay down their arms and accept President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's government as the sole legitimate government," the ECOWAS statement said.

## Kidnappings on the wane in the Philippines, crime monitors say

MANILA (AFP) — The number of kidnappings in the Philippines fell almost a quarter this year with the most dramatic drop in the two months to December after the creation of a presidential anti-crime task force, citizens' monitors said Tuesday.

There were 188 known kidnap victims this year compared to 249 in 1997, the Citizens' Action Against Crime (CAAC) said in a year-end report. Of these, six were abducted in November and 11 in December.

The known total of ransom paid plunged 61 per cent to 119 million pesos (about \$3 million) this year from 306

million pesos (\$7.8 million) in 1997, the group said.

CAAC described the decline in kidnappings over the past two months in the capital Manila as "dramatic."

"Metro Manila recorded only one kidnapping incident each in November and December from a high of one every other day during the same period in 1997," CAAC said in a statement.

Another watchdog, the United Pasig Against Crime, said: "We believe that the back of the kidnapping menace has been broken... although some still fail to comprehend this."

United Pasig executive director Alejandro Melchor

said in a statement that "proper follow-through will ensure that this victory becomes a permanent condition and that kidnapping will no longer be regarded as a major problem in this country."

The two groups credited the decline in kidnappings to the formation of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, headed by police director Panfilo Lacson, a close confidant of President Joseph Estrada.

The task force was formed two months ago in an effort to fulfill Estrada's promise to crush kidnap gangs within six months from taking office on June 30.

## Brazil may offer a deal to jailed kidnappers on hunger strike

SAO PAULO (AFP) — Brazil's government may offer several jailed foreign kidnappers who have been on hunger strike for 43 days a deal to return them to their countries, officials said.

The hospital where the protesters are being held announced late Monday that four of the eight prisoners — five Chileans, two Argentines and a Brazilian — were in critical condition and "at the end of their resources."

Responding to public outcry in Brazil and neighbouring countries and growing pressure from politicians, union leaders, intellectuals and artists, President

Fernando Henrique Cardoso met late Monday with members of his cabinet and foreign representatives to work out a deal.

Justice ministry sources said the government may propose Tuesday that the foreign prisoners be "transferred" — not deported — to their countries of origin, despite the lack of bilateral treaties covering such matters.

The sources, however, did not mention whether the tentative deal included a pardon for the Brazilian hunger strikers.

The Chileans and Argentine convicts have said

through their spokesman Breno Altman that they would "not accept a deal... that does not include a pardon for the Brazilian prisoners."

The eight hunger strikers, plus two Canadians who have been repatriated, were convicted for the 1989 kidnapping of a prominent Brazilian businessman who was later freed unharmed by police. The eight are serving 24 to 26 years in jail. They have taken no food for 43 days and no water or medicine for the past five days.

Cardoso has asked the eight to end their hunger strike and wait for a vote in

Congress next month on whether they should be sent back home.

But the prisoners have replied that they would rather die than go back to jail and that they would be allowed to return should the Brazilian Congress approve their repatriation.

However, according to the Brazilian news agency Globo, Chile and Argentina have signalled that they would be willing to sign formal bilateral treaties with Brazil covering the transfer of prisoners.

Such a commitment by the

two countries, the agency added, would allow the immediate repatriation of the Argentine and Chilean hunger strikers.

The convicted kidnappers, all members of leftist groups, had demanded a ransom of \$30 million for Brazilian businessman Abilio Diniz. The money apparently was to be used to finance anti-government rebels in El Salvador.

The leftist groups to which the kidnappers belonged in Chile and Argentina at first supported the abduction of Diniz, but lost interest after the kidnappers were arrested.

## Makah learn patience along with whale hunting skills

NEAH BAY, Washington (AP) — The Makah Indian tribe has waited more than 70 years to return to the Pacific to hunt grey whales.

For some, the last three months have been among the longest. "No one here has ever hunted the whale. There is much to learn, and time has taken away the teachers. One lesson is clear already: some things cannot be rushed."

Dozens of reporters stampeded here in late September, responding to a report that the tribe's first whale hunt in decades was under way. The hunts had stopped in the 1920s, when commercial whalers brought the world whale population to the brink of extinction.

But since Oct. 1, when the tribe was officially cleared to hunt, the Makah have yet to venture into the Pacific to search for a whale. Fog, weather, inexperience, mechanical problems, disagreements over procedures — all manner of obstacles have conspired to keep harpoon away from target.

Most of the reporters are gone, along with protesters and their

ships. The Makah, meanwhile, are still trying to recreate a store of lost knowledge.

Some Makah elders remember tasting whale meat as children.

Some of the women were taught how to prepare the meat, how to render the oil. Some of the men know how to fashion whaling canoes from tall red cedar.

But so much time has passed, there is no one still alive who knows how to whale. And hunting the whale — especially in small boats, especially in winter seas, especially grey whales — is dangerous.

But if any people have whaling in their genes, it is the Makah. They are the ones who could "find the way to resurrect it," said Ed Claplanho, a member of the Makah Whaling Commission and former tribal chairman.

Whaling remains a vital part of tribal tradition. The story is still told of how the thunderbird brought the whale to the Makah a hungry year long ago. The image of the whale — in the Makah colours of black and red — decorates the school, local homes, costumes and baskets.

Huge weathered whale skulls and bones adorn front yards in this community of 2,000 — 1,400 of them among the tribe's 2,300 enrolled members.

The pending hunt goes against tradition: a communal, tribal hunt, pooling the available knowledge.

"A commission hunt," some say without enthusiasm. Traditionally, whaling families mounted their own hunts, with their own secret preparations and sacred songs. Some aspects of this pooling business have not gone well, but lessons are learned, ruffled feelings smoothed — the process continues.

At this point, there is a pool of 17 men to fill out the eight-man whaling crew. They've been chosen from the 23 families with a representative on the tribe's whaling commission.

There is one canoe — the 10-metre red-and-black Hummingbird — and two motorised support boats. Another canoe is being built — a longer, broader craft in the whaling tradition, its silky golden surface glim-

mering in the shadows.

When the hunt takes place, the plan is to follow a ceremonial harpoon strike from the canoe with high-powered rifle fire from the support boats, trying for a quick, humane kill.

"We need to get out there," says Wayne Johnson, the whaling captain chosen earlier this month. "We need to get it done." That would mean facing the open sea and the grey whale, a usually placid marine mammal up to 13.5 metres long.

The southbound migration by 23,000 whales is late this year. Scientists believe warmer temperatures could be a factor.

The delay means the greys will come during the winter storm season, a dangerous time that can bring weeks of 7.5-metre swells and howling winds. The crew has most of the equipment it needs, including radios and wetsuits.

Claplanho believes the whaling crew should wait until the new canoe is ready, a date that has been postponed several times. Some now say January, some April.

The tribe is allotted a maximum

of five whales a year — 20 through 2002 — and some say that is designed to provide one whale to each of the old villages.

But at this point, all attention is on the first whale.

"I only need one," says Claplanho, who wonders if anyone has need for more in these modern times.

Meat can be had at Washburn's General Store, but most Makah supplement their diets with foods harvested from their rich land and sea — deer, elk, grouse, berries, roots, salmon, halibut, seal and shellfish.

For centuries, whale was a central part of the Makah diet, as whaling was a central part of Makah life and culture.

Some of those who remember it miss it. Some who don't remember it would like to know what they are missing. Many believe a return to traditional foods would restore health to a community where diabetes and other problems are linked to the modern American diet.

After the first hunt, "then we'll see," said Marcy Parker, Makah tribal council vice chairman.



Zookeeper Juergen Jahr measures the horn of female rhino Mzima, Dec. 28, during the annual stocktaking at the Berlin Zoo. At the end of every year, zoo staff note the stock and growth of the animals (AFP photo)



## Jordan Times

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## Sounding the alarm

MIZAN, A local group of lawyers seeking to deepen respect for human rights in society did the right thing when it recently organised, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and the National Task Force for Children, a seminar on the growing problem of child labour in Jordan.

By highlighting the problem of child labour and the rights of the child as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and other human rights instruments, Mizan has successfully shed light on the crisis in Jordan. The main culprit behind child labour, we have come to conclude, is poverty which forces families to send their own children out to the market in search for badly-needed income. When unemployment among adults is so high, exploitation of children becomes very easy. Unless we become able to secure not only gainful employment for Jordanians but also a minimum wage that is adequate for a decent living standard, children would remain vulnerable to market greed.

True we have laws to prevent child labour, but these legislations are rarely enforced and do not cover grey areas in the labour market such as family enterprises, farms and domestic labour. Also, there is a clear absence of a political will to enforce the 1996 Labour Law which prohibits any Jordanian under the age of 16 from engaging in gainful employment. If we cannot avoid child labour then it has to be regulated by setting two criteria: Minimum wage and maximum working hours. Factories and other firms employing children should also be required to contribute to children education.

Sociologists, educators and psychologists attending the seminar suggested that making secondary education compulsory would go a long way to alleviate the problem. Such a step is sound in its own right even though it may not realistically lead to ensuring that children will continue to attend school after 15.

Concern for human rights needs to be expanded to cover economic, social and cultural rights as called for by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Under ICESCR, Jordan is treaty obligated to make secondary and even university education free. While supporting this call to expand the scope of free education in the country, we remain sceptical about the ability of any such measure to realistically rectify the problem. In the final analysis, nothing short of equitable and broadly based economic development cushioned by an adequate social net would resolve the issue. In addition, political will must be there to enforce our laws that aim to protect one of the most vulnerable group of society. In any case, the process of examination, evaluation and rectification of child labour needs follow-up mechanisms. Otherwise, the sounding of the alarm this time would be unheard.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, made a great sacrifice when he invited the Arab Parliamentary Union to meet here. The Regent's mission was almost impossible as his words were reflecting the official stand. Highlighting the Iraqis' suffering was necessary in addressing the international community, especially the U.S., the writer said. This stand, however, angers the Iraqi government as it believes that the issue is not a matter of suffering but one of rights, said Fanek. Similarly, talking about the U.S. "aggression" is not easy, as the superpower thinks that its actions are legitimate, added the writer.

Al Dustour's editorial said that at the time when the whole world was trying to get over the recent allied aggression against Iraq, the U.S. keeps "harassing" the country. Referring to the recent retaliation of the superpower's fighter planes against Iraqi missiles fired in its northern no-fly zone, the newspaper said the illegitimate action aims at weakening the country's power and stand, and worsen the problem. According to this U.S. stubbornness, the Iraqi defence against the attacking planes entering the no-fly zone is an "aggression," said the newspaper. Al Dustour condemned the attack, as well as the air sanctions and called on the U.N. Security Council to take responsible measures to confront such "escalation."

## Washington Watch

# Netanyahu's big bang

By Dr. James J. Zogby

IN ISRAEL they are calling it the "big bang," and by that they do not mean merely the collapse of the Netanyahu government. More significant than that are the contentious upcoming elections and the expected demise of Israel's two major electoral blocs, Labour and Likud. The prime minister, in reality, brought down his own government. In two-and-a-half years, Netanyahu has managed to alienate most of the leadership in his own party. His machinations can be maddening. He has played the proverbial shell game, but with an interesting twist. No matter how he moves the shells, they remain in place — and none of them hide any pea.

There has been a remarkable consistency to Netanyahu's inconsistency — and so he has been irritating mostly to those who have allowed themselves to be deceived by his antics. In fact, all of his moves have been designed mainly to confound his opponents while masking his real interests — to remain in power and do as little as possible to advance the peace process.

In this regard he has made prophets of his sharpest critics, like Uri Avnery, a leftist pro-peace former member of the Knesset. Before the October Wye plantation talks, Avnery wrote that Netanyahu's strategy would be either to not go to Wye, or if he went, to not agree to anything. Finally, Avnery wrote, if Netanyahu was forced to sign an

agreement at Wye, he would, upon returning to Israel, find a way not to implement it.

And so it came to pass that the prime minister had no choice but to go to Wye and sign an agreement, and so the only option left was to not implement what he had signed — even to the point of bringing down his own government.

Immediately upon returning from Wye, Netanyahu turned his rhetoric against the agreement and the Palestinians with whom he had negotiated the deal. He added new conditions and sought to unilaterally change what had already been negotiated.

Even to the last minute of his farcical rule, he continued to play such games, offering to form a coalition government with the Labour Party (which he could have done at any point had he been honest) on the condition that they accept the five new conditions he imposed on the Palestinians for the resumption of the Wye peace deal.

Labour refused and so he had no choice but to support a call for new elections — a deliberate ploy to take the risk of saving his own head in a new electoral contest.

Despite the views of some of Netanyahu's apologists, the prime minister has never wavered from the principles of his ideology. Even his agreeing to limited troop withdrawals from the West Bank, and

allowing some Palestinian self-rule did not violate his commitment to maintain control over "Eretz Israel." That Palestinians govern themselves in ghettos, without sovereignty, fits within the model laid out by Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist school of Zionist thought.

This much he would do, but no more. When pushed to do more, he brought on the "big bang." With new elections, Netanyahu is counting on winning with the support of the far right whom, he believes, in the end, see him as their only hope to defeat a real peace with the Palestinians.

Armed with his inflammatory American propagandist and media advisor Arthur Finkelstein, a war chest of campaign funds supplied by his American right-wing Jewish supporters, and his ability to incite passions of division and fear — he will wage a hard campaign.

Netanyahu will count on the support of extremist settlers, his natural base, and he will seek to provoke a Palestinian backlash, or (as in recent days) a Lebanese backlash to support his policies of fear.

But the election of 1999 will not be a simple replay of this narrow victory over Shimon Peres in 1996. First of all, the Likud bloc itself is in disarray. The traditional leaders of the party have always seen Netanyahu as an interloper and outsider whose rise to power they

opposed and feared. Now with his government's collapse, they too will challenge him. Benny Begin, the son of former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, has bolted Likud, and Dan Meridor, former finance minister, has left the party and may join a new centrist one to challenge Netanyahu.

It is even rumoured that the popular and somewhat moderate Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, might also bolt Likud and may even support Labour's candidate Ehud Barak.

The formation of a centrist party made up of former Likud leaders like Roni Milo, former mayor of Tel Aviv, who is deeply disturbed by the power that Orthodox religious elements have assumed in the government, may be a serious and complicating factor in these elections. Likud secularists will have the option of supporting this new party if it can gain momentum.

Another complicating factor is the awaited announcement of Chief-of-Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. He has already left his military post and may announce his candidacy for the prime minister's race, and plans to set up his own centrist party. Not much is known about Lipkin-Shahak's views, but the strong support he receives in opinion polls is a sign of the weakness of Labour's candidate, Barak, and the hopes that many Israelis have for someone, anyone, to save them their current

morass. Another important consideration in this election will be the attitude of Israel's Palestinian Arab citizens. They constitute 20 per cent of the population and can be the deciding factor in defeating the right wing.

It was the decision of more than 100,000 of this bloc not to vote in Peres, because of his bombing of Lebanon in April 1996, that lost him reelection that year. To win the vote, however, a candidate will have to be serious about peace and the protection of Arab rights in Israel. Up until now Barak, the Labour candidate, has not inspired the Arab community — a factor that may present his candidacy with a problem.

Regardless, however, of who wins this confusing and crazy election, when the dust settles real difficulties will remain. The imperatives of peace, as well as the intransigent demands of the extremist settlers, will continue to face the next government. Palestinians will require justice, and the settlers will have to be confronted. For that to occur the next government will be required to demonstrate more courage and strength than Barak and more justice and honesty than Netanyahu. That will be a tall order for an Israeli body politics, divided as it is now.

## Israel's policy in the territories: 'Domination from the outside'

The prevailing wisdom is that the occupied territories are on the verge of an explosion. But Israel's external method of control — aided by the PNA — suggests that the current status quo of no peace, no war may endure for a long time. Israel Shahak writes in Middle East International

the centre of Hebron are surrounded by Palestinians and so are in a weak strategic position and "cause friction," Kiryat Arba has Palestinian neighbours on one side only.

### Saving manpower

But the greatest difference is with regard to the use of army manpower. To a large extent, Kiryat Arba can defend itself and, even in emergencies, would need only a small number of supporting troops. But the 400,000 Jews in the centre of Hebron require about 20 soldiers and police each (not counting secret police) and still there is "friction" every day.

The important issue of manpower waste is better illustrated by comparing how the Israeli army dealt with Palestinian demonstrations under conditions of "conquest from the inside" and how it deals with them now. In the past, the army tried, theoretically, to quell demonstrations in every street and destroy all manifestations of Palestinian nationalism. Rabin pointed out — and his argument is justified by experience — that Israeli domination hardly suffered if Palestinians waved flags.

This is Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attitude as well. When Palestinians burn his effigy in their towns, as has often happened recently, the Palestinians are — so the Israeli argument goes — satisfied emotionally with such symbolic acts but then go home and "carry on as usual." But if the Palestinians want to confront the Israeli army, they can do so now only on the main roads leading out of a town and before the roadblocks. To stop them there requires fewer soldiers than to patrol the entire town.

The issue of preventing manpower waste applies to so many areas that I will be content with only one additional example: border crossings. Under previous conditions (i.e. before Oslo), each border crossing, for example the King Hussein bridge (Allenby) on the Jordan River, needed many Israeli officials and troops and was notorious for corruption. Now control remains but manpower waste and "friction" is cut to a minimum.

When a Palestinian or foreign visitor enters the document control room at the bridge he sees only a row of PA officials sitting before a glass wall. Those whose documents are dealt with do not realise that one can see through that glass from behind. And there, behind the glass, sits a single Israeli "official" (actually a Shin Bet agent) who can communicate with the Palestinian officials by phone. If he wants to stop anybody he has the power to do this, since without his final word the visible officials are powerless.

### Symbol over substance

However, this efficient arrangement — indeed the entire concept of "domination from the outside" — depends for its success on a single but very important factor: Palestinians must not know what is happening to them, at least with regard to essentials of the situation. Instead, their attention must be diverted by relatively unimportant details. In order to accomplish this end, two conditions must be fulfilled. There must be no democracy or freedom of expression, so that the Palestinian media can be properly controlled; and relatively unimportant issues must be manipulated to manufacture conflict.

By now it is obvious to everybody that under Palestinian President Yasser Arafat the Palestinian media publish only what is convenient for him and Israel. A single example of what they do not publish will suffice. No Palestinian paper, television or radio station has said a word about the Israeli "official" who sits behind the glass at the bridge.

The second requirement is best illustrated by the crucial issue of settlements, especially

those in Jerusalem. Each time Ateret Kohanim or an American millionaire buys two houses in Jerusalem, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) makes an enormous fuss in which the Zionist left and foreign media participate. At the same time thousands of houses intended for Jews in East Jerusalem are built without protest and thousands more go up in neighbouring towns.

Visitors to the PNA's Jerusalem headquarters are dragged to see Ateret Kohanim projects which constitute less than one per cent of actual settlement construction in and around Jerusalem built by the government itself. This concentration on issues of no strategic importance from the Israeli point of view — and with it the avoidance of the really important issues — is evident in any Palestinian media campaign undertaken since Oslo.

### The real state of affairs

This leads us to another conclusion: relations between the Israeli government and the PNA are actually quite good in spite of the smokescreen of apparent conflict so prominent in the declarations of Netanyahu and Arafat.

On October 2, for example, Shimon Shiffer, political correspondent of Israel's daily Yedioth Aharonot (whom I regard as the Hebrew press' best political commentator) reported how their spokesmen, Danny Naveh (Israel's cabinet secretary) and Ahmad Tibi (Arafat's adviser on Israeli affairs) behaved during a TV interview. In front of the cameras they shouted and gesticulated at each other. When the cameras were off, however, they treated each other like the best of friends.

There are more solid grounds for supposing that the off-camera scene represents the real state of relations between the regimes. For example, all heads of PA security forces are officially Israeli VIPs. The family of one of the most important of those chiefs, Jibril Rajub, head of the Preventive Security Force in the West Bank, lives in Jerusalem, Israel, which makes a lot of noise about "united" and "Jewish" Jerusalem, allows Rajub to keep armed guards around his house.

It is true that the economic situation of Palestinian people has worsened since Oslo, but it is also true that the economic situation of PNA officials gets better all the time. The poverty of the people and riches of the officials are due equally to Israeli controls. Finally, the present state of affairs enjoys American blessing. The CIA trains the PNA security forces and, according to the Hebrew press, has recently supplied them with its best phone-tapping system. This will be used to arrest people who live under Israel's "domination from the outside" for their too critical talk. Important negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian officials take place in the presence of the head of the CIA's Israel office. This factor, and the general success of the "domination from the outside" system, brings us to the conclusion that the present situation is stable, and apart from some minor clashes, probably planned by both sides in advance in order to satisfy their gullible publics, will endure for some years at least.

All the talk about impending conflict is in my view just disinformation: two parties who regularly and amicably meet in the presence of the CIA are not going to anger the big boss who chairs their meetings. When a real change comes, as it surely will some day, the first sign will be the attempt to learn the real situation on the part of people on both sides and with their consequent refusal to let themselves be bamboozled by their respective regimes.

## Silent night?

By Diala Al Jabri

BAGHDAD, a centuries-old city, has once again been bombed; defenceless before high-tech aerial onslaughts. An American pilot, interviewed atop an aircraft carrier, described the situation as "an experience." For many of these young pilots this was their first time in "real" combat. The young men and women on those carriers were seen to be laughing and joking amongst one another as they went about their business, at very safe distances against an inert target.

To them, there is nothing personal about what they are doing; they'd like to be home with their families by Christmas. A flight commander interviewed at an American air base in Virginia a few months ago — during one of the many "warm-ups" to bombing Baghdad (they're playing our song) said that his boys were raring to go. "To them" he said, "this is their Super Bowl."

CNBC commentators were equally amused as they noted that the final Saturday night bombing seemed to intensify after the voting on each impeachment act went against Clinton.

Much lip service was given to the sensitivity of bombing during the Islamic "Holy Month of Ramadan"; and "air raid sirens sounding out one last time over the call to dawn prayers" marking the beginning of the second day's fast. However, this had not stopped the U.S. and Britain from extending to four nights of nightmare for Baghdad and Iraq and the Arab World beyond.

U.S. brass was surprised at the complete lack of response and defence from a country that has been systematically destroyed (from both the inside and the outside). The Iraqi people have been held hostage to an ongoing power game for so long that they no longer react to fear.

The faces of those in hospital — where there are no medical supplies — registered something far beyond despair; it is the mute acceptance of a fate worse than death, which may however, still lead to death at any moment. They maintained their spirits

against this atrocity that constantly renew itself at their expense.

Bombing Iraq — a matter of systematic ease for the U.S. and Britain — has become a matter of soul-eating helplessness to the Arabs. The streets of the Arab capitals that have not been bombed are more deflected than Baghdad.

There is a whole lot of rage out there; as was seen in coverage of street scenes in Damascus, Cairo and Amman. In bombing Iraq the U.S. and Britain uncaged the beast in all of us Arabs.

In Basra, at the mouth of the tragically named Shatt Al Arab, an oil refinery was destroyed. It had been painstakingly rebuilt after 1991.

Basra still has the highest cancer rate in the region after that first war. This was publicised by the skeletal little girl flown out of Iraq last Christmas for treatment for cancer in the U.K.; breathing was almost too much of an effort for the wisp of spirit that remained within her. A few months ago she was returned to her family; her rosily round face and newly trusting eyes almost unrecognisable. She was back in Basra now, like so many others who remain faceless to the West. These children have paid for the war above all others — the lost generation of a country formerly so incredibly wealthy in history, resources and spirit.

Meanwhile, Israel planes — never ones to miss an opportunity — bombed southern Lebanon while the American and British "smart bombs" rained on Iraq in operation "Desert Fox" (someone out there must derive such masculine pleasure at naming these things).

In the U.S., American public attention was being shared between impeachment proceedings grinding inexorably and interminably on (another power game), and Christmas shopping with a smattering of CNN's "the strike against Iraq" thrown in. Fortunately CNN had changed from the original "showdown with Iraq" as it became increasingly obvious that no one — except the Americans and British — was showing up for "showdown" with

## Turkey

## King lea

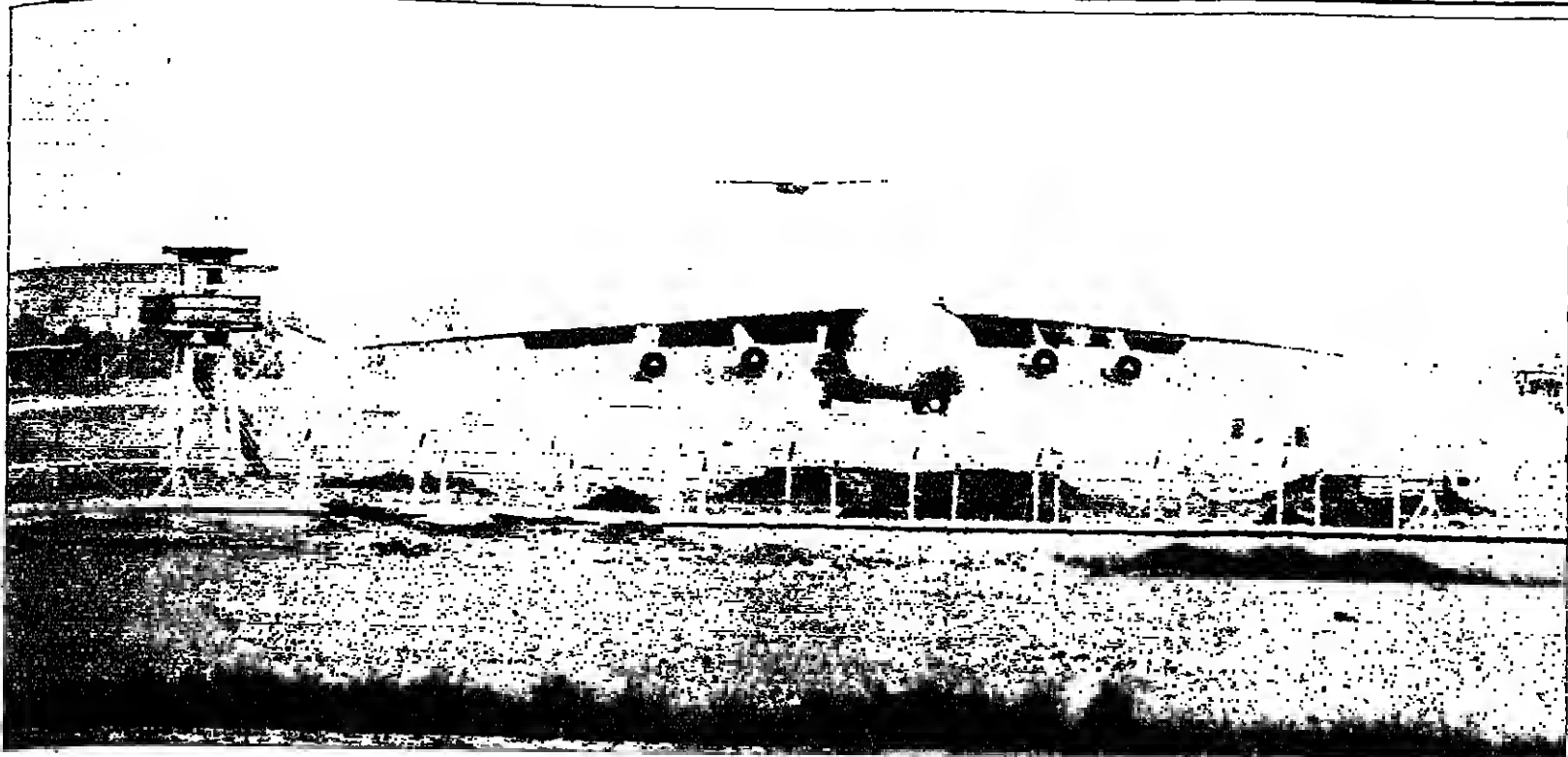
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A U.S. aircraft moves towards the runway to take off from Incirlik airbase near the southern Turkish city of Adana on Tuesday. The joint U.S.-Turkish airbase appeared quiet on Tuesday, witnesses said. The base was used to launch U.S. planes which bombed an Iraqi missile battery on Monday (Reuters photo)

## Turkey urges calm in Iraqi no-fly zone patrols

ANKARA (R) — Turkey, concerned about possible involvement following a brief clash on Monday between Iraqi forces and Turkish-based U.S. military aircraft, renewed its calls on Tuesday for a peaceful solution to the situation.

The U.S. warplanes had taken off from an airbase in southern Turkey to patrol a no-fly zone over neighbouring northern Iraq.

U.S. officials said their aircraft retaliated after Iraqi missiles were launched at them from the ground.

"This is a sensitive situation for Turkey. We are making our warnings for the use of the base with sensitivity," Defence

Minister Ismet Sezgin told Reuters.

The Turkish government has to juggle its loyalty to the United States, a fellow member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, with its relations with southern neighbour Iraq.

Turkey has hosted the U.S.-led air force at a southern airbase since the 1991 Gulf War. The patrols are designed to protect a Kurdish enclave from any attack by Baghdad.

But Turkey is concerned about possible immigration that might be caused by any resumption of hostilities against Iraq and wants to resume trading with its neighbour.

Monday's incident was the most serious since the joint U.S.-British aerial strike nine days ago. Those raids were launched after Iraq refused to cooperate with the U.N. arms inspection mission UNSCOM.

Sezgin said the U.S. planes used the right of self-defence in response to the Iraqi attack and said Ankara was seeking a peaceful solution to the tension.

"Iraq also should comply with the U.N. resolutions. We want our neighbour to return to the international community as soon as possible," he said.

Ankara's objection to the use of the base for any assault on Iraq is already known to its Western allies. "We do not

want a neighbour country to be harmed from Incirlik when there is no reason," Sezgin said.

While Ankara has quietly backed the United States in previous stand-offs with Baghdad, it complains of losses from an embargo on Iraq after the 1991 invasion of Kuwait.

Ankara issued a veiled warning to Baghdad following Monday's increased tension. "It is necessary for regional stability to avoid actions that would disturb the implementation of Northern Watch," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a reference to the no-fly zone mission.

Iraq has insisted that it

downed a Western plane in the attack but U.S. officials in Washington and at the air base in Turkey have stated that all aircraft returned safely.

In the wake of the aerial attacks earlier this month, Baghdad vowed to fire against Western planes patrolling the two no-fly zones in southern and northern Iraq.

The Kurdish enclave of northern Iraq has slipped from Baghdad's control since after the Gulf War.

An Iraqi Kurdish group said it was worried that an escalation of tension between Baghdad and Washington could threaten the Kurds' fragile autonomous enclave in northern Iraq.

## Iraqi Kurd group says tension may threaten enclave

Agencies

AN IRAQI Kurdish group said on Tuesday it was worried an escalation of tension between Iraq and the United States could threaten the Kurds' fragile autonomous enclave in the north of the country.

U.S. fighter planes which protect the Kurdish-held territories from attack by President Saddam Hussein's forces bombed an Iraqi missile battery on Monday in the most serious clash since the end of Operation Desert Fox two weeks ago.

"We believe the escalation could lead to a situation that might change the status quo," Faik Nerweyi, spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), told Reuters.

He said the patrols, dubbed Operation Northern Watch and flying out of southern Turkey, were "vital" to the Kurdish territories which slipped from Baghdad's control after the 1991 Gulf war.

"[Northern Watch] is in place and we are happy about it and that's why we are worried this escalation of tension will change the situation," said Nerweyi. "We are worried. The population in our area is worried."

The U.S. and British warplanes patrol Iraqi skies north of the 36th parallel, an area covering most of the Kurdish-held enclave but also the Iraqi government-

controlled city of Mosul and a swathe of territory ruled from Baghdad.

Massoud Barzani's KDP and the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talabani, the two feuding groups that control the enclave, signed a U.S.-sponsored peace agreement in September ending years of sporadic fighting.

PUK officials were not available for comment. Iraqi Kurd leaders have said U.S. officials told them the peace deal was essential if the United States was to protect them from a possible Iraqi government attack.

Kurds to launch TV

In another development, The Kurdistan Democratic Party said Tuesday it will launch a new Kurdish satellite television outfit whose transmissions will also reach Turkey, where broadcasting in the Kurdish language is banned.

The party plans to present both cultural and political programmes in what would be the world's second Kurdish television station.

"We need a news alternative, other sources of information for the Kurds," said Faik Nerweyi, a representative of the Kurdish party in Ankara, Turkey's capital.

The channel so far has broadcast only short programmes as tests but should be ready for full broadcast soon, Nerweyi said.



Lewinsky to teach linguistics — report

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Mexican dailies, marking the Hispanic equivalent of April's Fools day. The Day of the Innocents, said Monday that Monica Lewinsky would teach at a prestigious university here and that the Pope would wear a gas mask during his forthcoming visit. The daily Reforma, in a fake front page at the back of the newspaper, said Lewinsky would chair the linguistics department at the Monterrey Campus in Mexico City. Saying Lewinsky was backed by the Kenneth Starr Foundation, the paper said that among the literature classics she included in this year's programme were "Deep Throat" and "The Happy Hooker." The paper also said Pope John Paul II, scheduled to visit Mexico in January, would be the first foreign dignitary to receive the keys of this highly polluted city wearing a gas mask.

Funeral hearse chased

ATHENS (R) — Greek police set off in hot pursuit of a funeral hearse after suspicions were aroused that its occupants were living, breathing illegal immigrants. The Athens News Agency (ANA) reported. ANA said the hearse took off at high speed when authorities in the northern town of Kastoria, near the Albanian border, began to show interest. Seven would-be immigrants from Albania were taken into custody after the hearse was cornered, but the driver escaped. The hearse had been stolen from a nearby village.

Man mistakenly cooks up human remains

HANOI (R) — Police searching for a missing man in northern Vietnam strongly suspect a local resident boiled up his bones to make traditional medicine, an investigator said on Tuesday. A police officer in Phu Tho province, 100 kilometres northeast of Hanoi, told Reuters the resident had found a scorched skeleton which still retained traces of flesh at the site of a recent fire in a forest clearing. The resident, who police declined to identify, had mistaken the skeleton for the remains of a large dead monkey, the police officer said. "The case is extremely rare, we suspected the victim committed a suicide in an immolation," he added.

Mankills pitbull with his bare hands

GLINDOW (AFP) — A German man who ran to the aid of a woman whose pitbull terrier had attacked her, killed the animal with his bare hands, police in this eastern town said Monday. Although a household pet, the pitbull is traditionally a fierce breed. The dog turned on its 54-year-old owner as she tried to pull it away from another dog it was fighting. The man, 40, intervened and was bitten by the terrier which he then proceeded to kill with his bare hands.

Deranged man slashes girl's face

VALENCE (AFP) — A deranged man slashed the face of an 11-year-old girl in Bourg-de-Peage, southern France, as he tried to re-enact a scene from the film "Terminator 2," police said Monday. The girl was feeding a cat on the banks of the Isere river on Saturday, when the 31-year-old man slashed her face several times, police in nearby Romans-sur-Isere said. Several passers-by intervened to rescue the girl who needed 25 stitches and will be kept in hospital for several days.

## King leaves hospital

(Continued from page 1)

"We, God willing, will leave Mayo Clinic in the morning of Tuesday, Dec. 29, 1998. The medical team has permitted that after six cycles of chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant after ablation of all lymphoma cells in the bone marrow. We will first depart for Washington, D.C., where we will stay for a few days before leaving for London and then, God willing, for Amman to be in the dear homeland, with my dear people and family.

The reason for taking a few days on the way home is recuperation for the purpose of regaining my normal strength. Doctors here and their colleagues elsewhere in the United States are pleased with the results of the tests that were taken as we conclude our stay at Mayo until we return for a new appointment next March. The results of the tests are better than the doctors had expected.

Thank God for His mercy

and blessings. The family and I have decided to inform you of the good news as soon as we got it so that you announce it to our family in the beloved Jordan and to all who wished us well all over the world. May God reward them.

"Peace be upon you, and God's Mercy and Blessing, my brother.

End of the letter. God's blessings in this Holy Month have multiplied with the return of His Majesty King Hussein, my beloved brother. I pray to God Almighty to protect our country and nation, and give us His support.

"When my servants ask thee concerning me, I am indeed close to them. I listen to the prayers of every suppliant when he called on me."

God the most great speaketh the truth.

Awaiting the return of our leader, His Majesty King Hussein, I convey to you all my love and greetings.

## Israel threatens to close Gaza airport

(Continued from page 1)

The statement said that Israeli security men had on Sunday been prevented from examining luggage carried in an Egyptian executive jet used by Arafat as he returned from Cairo.

The statement also said that the aircraft's passengers and flight crew had refused to allow their identity documents to be examined.

"These events constitute a flagrant violation of articles in the agreement which determine that the Israeli team is to conduct a security examination of cargo and to identify passengers," the statement said.

"Palestinian officials quickly hit back at the foreign ministry accusations, saying that they were nothing but 'exaggeration'."

"Complaints by the Israeli Foreign Ministry that Palestinian security breached the special agreement on the airport are an exaggeration and have no basis to them," Zeidan told AFP.

The agreement governing

security arrangements at the airport stipulates that the plane carrying President Arafat will not be searched — whether it is the presidential plane itself or another aircraft," Zeidan said.

"The plane that the President was using belongs to the Egyptian presidency and has been used a number of times, the last time on the 16th of this month, and it has never been searched. This shows that the Israeli foreign ministry is exaggerating," Zeidan said.

Israel retains the right to search all passengers entering or leaving Gaza international airport, as it does at other checkpoints into Palestinian controlled territory.

But a special protocol on security arrangements at the airport has never been made public.

The airport, widely viewed by Palestinians as a symbol of sovereignty, opened at the end of November following the signing of the now-troubled Wye River land-for-security agreement.

## Cyprus decides against deploying controversial missiles

(Continued from page 1)

NICOSIA (AFP) — Cyprus President Glafcos Clerides decided Tuesday against deploying controversial advanced ground-to-air missiles on the island, said a statement from the president issued after a meeting of the island's all-party National Council.

"I have arrived at the decision for non-deployment in Cyprus and I have agreed that we should begin negotiations

with the Russian government for possible deployment in [the Greek island of] Crete," Clerides said.

"In taking this decision I took seriously into account the position of the Greek government as expressed on Nov. 27 and repeated today," said the president who returned from consultations in Athens before the meeting.

Clerides said he had taken

the responsibility of the decision himself because there had been no unanimity among Greek-Cypriot politicians in the National Council.

"The lack of unanimity was clear. After this, as president of Cyprus, fully aware of my responsibilities and the critical stage our national issue is going through, I concluded at the decision," he said.

"I undertake the responsibility for this decision."

Cyprus's internationally recognized Greek-Cypriot government had come under enormous international pressure not to deploy the S-300 missiles it ordered from Russia early last year following Turkish threats to destroy them if they were installed on the divided island.

But Clerides insisted that he had not given in to "black-

## Iraq says it is defying no-fly zones

(Continued from page 1)

"Our pilots will obviously take appropriate action to enforce the no-fly zone. The no-fly zone prevents

Saddam [Iraq President Saddam Hussein] from using his own aircraft to oppress his people and threaten his neighbours. This remains a key element of our containment policy and we will aggressively enforce it," Leavy said.

Iraq on Tuesday rejected U.S. and British denials that Iraqi armed forces had shot down a Western plane on Monday.

Both Britain, which provided support for Monday's mission, and the United States said all of their fighters had returned safely to their air base in Turkey.

"No Western planes have been shot down in Iraq," a Pentagon spokesman reiterated on Tuesday.

Ramadan maintained on Tuesday that Iraqi observation posts and forces in the field confirmed that they had shot down a plane.

"We have not found the wreckage in the area where a search took place," Ramadan added.

The United States and its

allies set up no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq to allegedly protect Kurds and Shiites from air attack after forces loyal to President Saddam Hussein put down twin rebellions in those regions after the 1991 Gulf War.

Iraq has never recognised the zones, and Ramadan repeated the government's view Tuesday.

"The so-called air exclusion zones exist only in the sick imagination of the British and American administrations," he said.

He also stressed Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries were ready to fire on allied aircraft inside Iraq.

"Our resistance will continue against any penetration," he said. "The war is still on."

Iraqi newspapers on Tuesday applauded the public protests in Arab capitals after the United States and Britain bombed Iraq for four nights beginning Dec. 16.

The airstrikes were ordered after U.N. weapons inspectors reported Iraq was blocking their work. The U.N. sanctions — imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait — will not be lifted

until the inspectors declare Iraq is free of weapons of mass destruction.

In a front-page editorial, the al-Qadisiya newspaper warned Arab leaders that ignoring "the snowballing Arab wrath... will shake the ground from under their feet."

Iraqi criticism was especially harsh toward Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who said in an interview published Monday that "the ruling regime [in Iraq] is the reason for all the problems... and Egypt naturally does not support this regime."

The daily Babil, owned by Saddam's son Qudai, compared Mubarak's comments to "the panting of a dog."

Iraq's Foreign Ministry also issued a statement criticising the Arab League for postponing a meeting that was supposed to be held Wednesday to discuss Iraq's plight.

The statement, carried by the official news agency, suggested the delay was caused by Saudi Arabia, which it said "does what America wants at the expense of its own sovereignty and dignity."

## Taleban say Ben Laden to stay despite comments

KABUL (R) — Afghanistan's Taleban movement refused on Tuesday to comment on the latest outburst of exiled Saudi dissident Osama Ben Laden but reiterated he would not be expelled.

A senior Taleban official told Reuters on condition of anonymity that despite recent comments by Ben Laden, the movement would "remain committed to its promise of keeping him as a guest."

In a recent interview, the first since the August attacks by the United States on suspected guerrilla camps run by Ben Laden in eastern Afghanistan, Ben Laden urged Muslims to kill Americans and Britons for their air strikes on Iraq earlier this month.

Ben Laden, accused by the United States of masterminding the bombing of two of its embassies in Africa in August, which killed more than 200 people, has also said he would guide Muslims to wage a holy war against

Jews and Christians.

"I don't know about the interview and what was said in it, but he is our guest," the Taleban official said.

Ben Laden, who has denied being involved in the embassy bombings, has been stripped of his Saudi nationality.

Under pressure from the United States and Saudi Arabia, the Taleban in the past have said that Ben Laden was under "wraps" and barred from talking to the media or using

political and military activities against any other country.

The Taleban, a purist Islamic movement that rules 90 per cent of Afghanistan, has rejected repeated U.S. demands that it hand over the 41-year-old Ben Laden, saying that he is a guest and as such qualifies for protection.

The United States in November offered a \$5 million reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Ben Laden.

## Four British hostages killed in Yemen rescue

(Continued from page 1)

He said the kidnappers had demanded freedom for a member of the Islamic Jihad group who was captured recently when security forces closed down a military training camp run by the group in Abyan.

It was not immediately clear if the group was linked to other Islamist organisations operating secretly in other Arab countries under the same name.

Monday's abduction, involving eight women and eight men, was the largest single kidnapping in Yemen in at least two years, Yemeni officials said.

It took place three weeks after tribesmen abducted four German tourists including three women. The four have been in captivity since Dec. 6, Yemeni newspapers said.

The abductees demanded a ransom of 90 million rials (\$640,000), luxury cars, houses, military posts and state jobs for senior tribal members.

Tribesmen in Yemen have often kidnapped foreigners to press the government and oil

companies working in the country to meet demands such as improving infrastructure in tribal areas.

The first reported kidnapping was of a Canadian man in 1992, two years after the merger of North and South Yemen.

The kidnappings have threatened Yemen's tourism industry, a growing source of income which generated revenues of more than \$100 million last year.

Disgruntled tribesmen on Saturday blew up Yemen's main oil export pipeline but the

extent of the damage and the effect on output were unclear. It was the 19th attack since June on the Marib oil pipeline, which carries some 150,000 barrels per day.

Tribesmen kidnapped 13 Italians in the summer of 1997, prompting the government to threaten "stiff punishments" and bolster security in tourist areas.

An Italian tourist was shot and wounded in an apparent kidnapping attempt, one of the few previous occasions when a victim was harmed.

Illicit guns, mainly Kalashnikovs, are openly carried in Yemen. Unofficial estimates put the number of firearms at nearly 50 million, more than three times the population of 16 million.

Last August, prominent Yemeni tribesmen condemned the use of kidnapping and violence to press for demands in their strongholds and pledged to use peaceful means in future.

Some 1,500 tribesmen made the resolutions at the end of a three-day conference in Sanaa.



## Saudi Arabia forced to tighten belt for 1999

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia unveiled an austerity budget Tuesday for 1999 after losing a third of government revenues because of record low oil prices.

The last 12 months proved arduous as the once fabled petro-dollar economy contracted by 10.8 per cent.

The budget deficit ballooned to 46 billion riyals (\$12.2 billion), more than 2.5 times the predicted figure of 18 billion riyals (\$4.8 billion), the finance ministry admitted in its annual report.

Oil revenues, which account for 35-40 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, plummeted 34.8 per cent leading the government to raise loans in the private sector including bank loans. At the same time measures were taken to cut foreign payments and trim spending, the report noted.

Saudi Arabia, the world's

leading oil producer, suffered as the price of Brent, the North Sea benchmark, sank in early December below \$10 a barrel while Arabian Light sold at \$7.29.

The Saudi benchmark earned an average \$11 a barrel over the year. GDP was expected to have fallen in 1998 to \$130 billion according to calculations by the Saudi central bank which put GDP in 1997 at \$146 billion.

The 1999 budget, adopted Monday night at a Council of Ministers meeting, foresees a deficit of \$11.8 billion.

Revenues of \$32.2 billion (down from \$47.4 billion in 1998) are anticipated, and expenditures of \$44 billion, compared with \$2 billion dollars in the original 1998 budget.

King Fahd urged the ministers to abide by the budget and detailed a freeze on civil service recruitment

and promotions.

He also announced there would be no new foreign contracts and only essential imports such as medicines would be allowed into the kingdom.

The budget had to take into account "difficult economic conditions at the international level and that is why we have adopted measures to rationalise spending," he explained.

But projects already underway, health and education will not be affected by the austerity measures, the king said.

He confirmed the government's attempts to boost the private sector and create new jobs for Saudis.

The government announced during 1998 plans to privatise telecommunications and electricity as well as inviting foreign companies to join oil and gas exploration, 18 years after nationalising the petroleum industry.

He confirmed the government's attempts to boost the private sector and create new jobs for Saudis.

## Oil majors set to invest \$7b in northern Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The world's oil majors will invest up to seven billion dollars to develop Kuwait's northern fields over the next five years to double production levels there, according to Kuwait's oil minister.

Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah was quoted in Tuesday's press as saying the majors will contribute all necessary funds, technology and expertise to increase production capacity to over 900,000 barrels a day.

"The project has strategic economic, technical and security objectives," the minister said, cited by Arab Times.

Kuwait plans to intensify cooperation with foreign oil companies to boost production to three million barrels a day by 2005.

Kuwait carried out a month-long technical presentation in Britain and the United States in November when it put out an offer to the oil majors to develop the northern fields which lie on the Iraqi border.

Sheikh Saud said the offer

was open to all international oil companies and that each would be given only one oilfield to develop to curb a potential monopoly.

"In a later stage, oil fields in central and western Kuwait will be offered," the minister added, saying that oil firms would be committed to buying oil from the fields they develop.

Furthermore, the oil firms will construct an oil exporting port in Bubiyan, a northern Kuwaiti island and will also construct a town to house employees, some 60 per cent of whom would have to be Kuwaiti.

Sheikh Saud shot down speculation that Kuwait would sign partnership projects, saying that any "Operating Service Agreements" signed would not be a violation of the Kuwaiti constitution, which forbids foreign ownership of its natural resources.

"I assure you that no international company will own a drop of the Kuwaiti crude," the minister confirmed.

In the past, Kuwait has

expressed willingness to increase the role of Western oil companies. Kuwait's Supreme Petroleum Council approved foreign participation in principle in 1993, 1995 and 1997.

But Kuwait has so far limited foreign participation to technical assistance, including accords with France's Total, British Petroleum and Chevron of the United States.

Kuwait supplies around 10 per cent of the world's oil and has 100-year reserves at current production levels. The oil industry represents 90 per cent of the Gulf Arab state's exports.

Exchange Rates		Tuesday, 29-12-98		ACCESS 444888	
CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8780	0.1884
SAUDI RIYAL	5.1454	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
U.S. DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
EURO	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
BRITISH POUND	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
FRANCE FRANC	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
GERMANY MARK	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
ITALY LIRA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SPAIN PESA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
NETHERLANDS GILDER	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
FINLAND MARKKA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SEATTLE DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
INDONESIA RUPIAH	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
THAI BATH	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SINGAPORE DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
TAIWAN DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
HONG KONG DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
CHINA YUAN	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
RUSSIA RUBLE	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
UKRAINE HRYVNYA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
NETHERLANDS GILDER	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
FINLAND MARKKA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SEATTLE DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
INDONESIA RUPIAH	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
THAI BATH	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SINGAPORE DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
TAIWAN DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
HONG KONG DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
CHINA YUAN	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
RUSSIA RUBLE	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
UKRAINE HRYVNYA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000

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EURO	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
BRITISH POUND	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
FRANCE FRANC	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
GERMANY MARK	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
ITALY LIRA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SPAIN PESA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
NETHERLANDS GILDER	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
FINLAND MARKKA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SEATTLE DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
INDONESIA RUPIAH	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
THAI BATH	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SINGAPORE DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
TAIWAN DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
HONG KONG DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
CHINA YUAN	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
RUSSIA RUBLE	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
UKRAINE HRYVNYA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
U.S. DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8780	0.1884
SAUDI RIYAL	5.1454	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
U.S. DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
EURO	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
BRITISH POUND	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
FRANCE FRANC	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
GERMANY MARK	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
ITALY LIRA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SPAIN PESA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
NETHERLANDS GILDER	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
FINLAND MARKKA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
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THAI BATH	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
SINGAPORE DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
TAIWAN DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
HONG KONG DOLLAR	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
CHINA YUAN	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
RUSSIA RUBLE	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
UKRAINE HRYVNYA	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000

STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST	CHANGE
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	10170.14	10170.14	11.28
NEW YORK	DOW JONES	8221.75	8221.75	-0.07
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	869.00	869.00	-0.31
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	865.00	865.00	-0.31
NEW YORK	NYSE 100	1224.00	1224.00	-0.78
NEW YORK	NYSE 200	1224.00	1224.00	-0.78
PARIS	CAC 40	3873.10	3873.10	0.88
FRANKFURT	COMPOSITE	4600.20	4600.20	0.88

PRECIOUS METALS	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
GOLD	1.0000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8780	0.1884
SILVER	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
PLATINUM	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000

## Economic growth to slow in euro zone in 1999, but no recession — ECB

FRANKFURT (AFP) — Economic growth in the euro zone will slow in 1999 but will not lead to recession, European Central Bank (ECB) executive board member Otmar Issing said.

"The predictions for the euro zone in 1999 all give a single message: growth will slow considerably in 1999 but we're not on the verge of recession," Issing said in an interview with the German

news agency VWD published on Monday.

Issing's remarks were in line with comments by other ECB officials in recent weeks: at the start of December, ECB president Wim Duisenberg had said that while gross domestic product in the euro zone was widely expected to grow at a rate of just below three per cent in 1998, the projections "pointed unequivocally to some deceleration of real GDP growth in 1999."

Issing told the news agency that the outlook for price developments in the euro zone were very favourable.

"The price perspectives are very favourable, with no signs of any deflationary dangers nor the re-emergence of inflation," he said. "That means 1999 will be characterised by price stability."

The ECB assumes responsibility for monetary policy in the 11 countries participating in the single currency on Friday.

## China adopts securities law

BEIJING (AFP) — China's top legislature on Tuesday passed the country's first securities law to govern stock markets, ending six years of debate, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

The 214-article law, which takes effect on July 1 next year, was adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the report said.

The law has been debated for six years and governs all aspects of the securities industry. It prohibits foreigners from trading in so-called "A-shares" which are restricted to domestic investors.

"A stock investor must present legal documents proving his identity as a Chinese citizen his qualification as a Chinese legal person when opening a stock account," according to a clause in the law.

It provides for a two-tier system for the securities industry in which securities companies are required to separate their own accounts from those of their clients.

### وزارة التربية والتعليم Tender Announcement Ministry of Education

Directorate of Tenders has postponed the delivery of Tender No. 14/98 (6 lots) Arts and Crafts until 11:00 o'clock on Feb. 3, 1999.

Chairman  
of Special Tenders' Committee

### IMMEDIATE JOB VOCANCY

A Jordanian Company is seeking to employ a professional Executive Secretary with the following qualifications:

- Minimum 3 years experience.
- Strong command in English and Arabic.
- Excellent communications skills and master of operating computers.
- Highly motivated.
- Strong personality and managerial skills.
- University degree is an advantage.

Only qualified candidates should call this number for two days:

Mobile No. 079 535137

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### THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Free from strife  
2 Shiny paints  
3 Front passenger seat: slang  
4 Winnie the Pooh's creator  
5 10%-ers  
6 Red gems  
7 Starter chips  
8 Most wallflowerish  
9 Humorous  
10 Banister  
11 Memorable times  
12 Donate  
13 Alliance  
14 Flig's husband  
15 Trumpet's cousin  
16 Slip up  
17 Hostilities  
18 Property orients  
19 Run off  
20 Narrow opening  
21 Rock debris at cliff bases  
22 Site for a Vandyke  
23 Glass container  
24 Flahs  
25 Bumpkins  
26 Boxing great  
27 Lubricates  
28 Lennon's Ono  
29 Lupino and  
30 Tarbell  
31 First grade  
32 Balance on the brink  
33 Carrel furniture  
34 Some muscles  
35 Different  
36 Getty of "The Golden Girls"  
37 Bat pickum  
38 Used  
39 purchases  
40 Makes unhappy  
41 Semitic fertility goddess  
42 Out of (from nowhere)  
43 More dotty

4 Barrymore or Waters  
5 Historic period  
6 Wicked state  
7 Cherish as sacred  
8 Neon and radon  
9 Seats for tots  
10 Skip  
11 Iniquity  
12 Turning on a pivot  
13 Add pizzazz  
14 Sonnet stanzas  
15 Smith and Fleming  
16 John Wayne film, "True"  
17 Crude workman?  
18 The Eagles hit, "Hotel"  
19 Ken and Lens  
20 Service charges  
21 Drastic reorganizations  
22 Motorcycle's little brother  
23 checkers  
24 Old codger  
25 Emerald green gam  
26 Juneau resident  
27 Those who take chances  
28 Affirmative responses  
29 Looked about  
30 First name in mysteries  
31 Sargasso or Salton  
32 Also

### Peanuts

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY A HAND-DRAWN PICTURE OF SANTA CLAUS?

THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SANTA CLAUS.. IT LOOKS MORE LIKE "DAFFY DUCK"

I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW I CAN DRAW "DAFFY DUCK"!

### Andy Capp

I'VE COME BACK TO YOU, PET!

DID ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS OR NEIGHBORS REALLY ROUND IN MY ABSENCE?

RUBY REIGNS THAT ONE OF THEM SLIPPED IN DURING MY ABSENCE. SEE IF THERE WAS ANYTHING WORTH NICKING.

WELCOME TO THE NINETIES

### Mutt'n'Jeff

WE GOT A LETTER FROM THE LAWYER. HE SAID UNCLE JOE'S WILL IS TO BE RE-OPENED.

UNCLE JOE WAS A GRAND OLD MAN!

SOOOOO HAS BEEN LEFT TO JUST ONE OF YOU! ALL THE REST OF YOU RECEIVE ONLY ONE DOLLAR EACH!

NOW, WHICH ONE OF YOU IS NAMED FIDO?

### THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN

"If Santa Claus can afford to give away all those toys, we should find out what mutual fund he's using."

### JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

INGAR

CASHO

KELNER

CHEROM

Answer here: A of OF

Yesterday's Jumble: HIKER CAKED MAKEUP QUEENH. Answer: What she thought when she won the baking contest — A PIECE OF CAKE

Busin

Dat

A revu

Certificate

million and

FORECAST FOR DECEMBER

By Linda C. Black, Jr.

ARIES: The sun is in Aries, the sign of the ram, from March 21 to April 19. Aries is a fire sign, and people born under this sign are full of energy and enthusiasm. They are often leaders and are not afraid to take risks. They are also very competitive and love



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Certificates of deposit total JD1,106 million and carry JD196 million cost

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) continued during 1998 to intervene in the monetary market through the, dinar-denominated certificates of deposit which were first issued in 1993 due to the shortage of public debt tools. Since the beginning of 1997, the CBJ has extended more transparency and clarity on the mechanism of issuing the certificates of deposit (CDs) and has allowed trading them between banks. Such a move widened the stage for market forces to determine interest rates on the deposits and loans in the local market.

By using this indirect monetary tool, the Central Bank was able to organise the levels of local liquidity and ensure monetary stability as well as consolidate the trust in the dinar exchange rate. However, the CBJ had incurred high cost by implementing this process which, "was not important if compared to the stability and trust achieved."

In a memorandum presented to the Lower House of Parliament about the monetary policy and measures taken during 1998, the CBJ indicated that the outstanding balance of CDs at the end of October 1998 stood at JD1,106.1 million compared to JD120.3 million at the end of 1993 for an approximate cost of JD196 million.

According to the memorandum, the local liquidity during the first ten months of this year increased by JD279.5 or five per cent, a rate

expected to rise to around seven per cent by the end of this year. The CBJ predicts the local liquidity to grow between seven per cent and eight per cent in 1999 to meet the economic activity requirements.

Total deposits at licensed banks during the first ten months of 1998 increased by JD318.3 million or five per cent. Most of the increase was in foreign currency deposits, the CBJ pointed out. Credits extended to the private sector is expected to rise by nine per cent by the end of 1999 after recording a 7.5 per cent increase or JD264.4 million during the first ten months of this year.

As to foreign currency reserves, the Central Bank said the level of the reserves is comfortable despite a decline as a result of the pressure witnessed by the Kingdom. The CBJ indicated that foreign currency reserves at present stand at \$1.213 billion and is likely to reach \$1.225 billion by the end of this year. It predicted the level to go up to \$1.360 billion at the end of next year.

With regard to inflation, the memorandum said the rate stood at 5.1 per cent during the first ten months of this year and is expected to remain the same for the whole year. The Central Bank expected the inflation rate to drop to 3.5 per cent in 1999 (Al Ra'i).

## Muslim holiday making U.S. cash registers hum

WASHINGTON (AFP)

For America's six million Muslims, finding the right gift around Ramadan has gotten easier as Islamic products find their way into U.S. stores, mail-order catalogs and on the Internet.

As the gift-giving season takes American shoppers by storm, Islam seems to be joining the wave of commercialisation that has engulfed Christian and Jewish religious celebrations.

Islamic greeting cards, books about Muslim heroes, and computer software featuring ani-

maled stories from the Koran are now offered by businesses seeking to attract an expanding Muslim market.

Ramadan, the Islamic Holy Month which began December 19, is one of the most profitable times of the year for companies specializing in Islamic products, according to Arvind Kajara, co-founder of 123 Greetings, a Web site that sells more than 7,000 Muslim greeting cards per day during the month.

Until recently, most American Muslim businesses imported their

merchandise from the Middle East. Today, they produce their own products by using technology to reach wider audiences and meet the demands of their growing clientele.

Sound Vision, the oldest Islamic multimedia company in the United States, produces bilingual videos, books about American Muslims, and computer software teaching Arabic to English speakers.

"Products made overseas have little relevance to local Muslim communities," said Shakeel Syed, Sound Vision's marketing director.

Less than a decade ago, most American Muslims were recent immigrants. Today, Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in the United States and more than 60 per cent of Muslims are U.S.-born.

This largely untapped market has provided lucrative incentives for Islamic companies to create products addressing the specific needs of Muslims growing up in the United States.

One of Sound Vision's

most popular gift items is an educational video series featuring an English-speaking puppet named Adam.

Through songs and computer animation, Adam introduces American children to the pillars of the Islamic faith.

In a society where negative stereotypes of Muslims abound, Islamic businesses are filling a void by offering products showing a positive side of Islam, according to Suhail El Barzangi, co-founder of Astrolabe Pictures, one of Sound Vision's four main competitors.

"Parents in particular are concerned about raising their children to feel proud of who they are," he said.

Astrolabe Pictures, founded in 1994, distributes a 30-page color catalog to some 10,000 Muslim households each year.

The Virginia-based company's financial success prompted its founders to open a branch in England five months ago. While U.S. Muslims remain the main con-

sumers of Islamic commercial products, non-Muslims, particularly teachers, are also taking interest.

The general trend toward multicultural education has prompted schools to include Islam in their curriculum. As a result, "more and more educators are calling us to purchase books about Islam as part of their multicultural offerings," El-Barzangi said.

Large U.S. chains are also catching on as they recognise an opportunity for higher earnings, particularly around Muslim holidays, Syed added.

English translations of the Koran, Islam's holy text, can be found on the shelves of bookstore giant Barnes and Noble or on the popular Internet shopping site Amazon.com.

And the music chain Tower Records features rap songs about Islam and a biography of the Prophet Mohammad recited by Yusuf Islam, the former rock'n'roll artist known as Cat Stevens.

## National Bank of Kuwait given highest rating in the Middle East

KUWAIT CITY (AFP)

Standard and Poor's (S&P) rating agency assigned on Tuesday an "A-" long-term rating, the highest in the Middle East, to the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK).

S&P cited NBK's pre-eminent position in the Kuwaiti market as well as its good asset quality, strong capitalisation and consistent profitability as the main reasons for the rating.

"The current rating reflects a balance of the inherent risks of operating in an economy with a small private sector and vulnerability to prolonged drops in oil prices against NBK's solid domestic franchise in consumer and corporate banking and financial position," S&P said.

"Despite the recent turbulence in local and international financial markets and the drop in oil prices, the bank's assets remain good due to their strategy of conservative risk management."

"NBK's exposure to emerging markets is very limited and the bank has solid coverage against its operating environment and risk profile."

The agency also said NBK enjoyed a good

record on technological innovation, distribution capability and blue-chip customer list, a statement released Tuesday said.

"S&P expects the bank to remain healthy and profitable into the foreseeable future."

NBK was founded in 1957 and is Kuwait's

largest bank and the Gulf's sixth biggest bank with assets of \$13.4 billion in 1997.

The bank has also received the highest Middle East rating from Moody's, Fitch IBCA, Thompson BankWatch and Capital Intelligence ratings agencies.

### UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, requires an:

Administrative Assistant, Grade 11 (AVN/21/98)

The incumbent of this position is responsible for providing administrative, secretarial and clerical support to the Director of Administration and Finance, HQ (Gaza). **REQUIREMENTS:** Successful completion of full secondary education; completion of post secondary business or secretarial course of at least one year's duration; demonstrated ability to type at 50 WPM, and to take shorthand at an acceptable speed; ability to operate computer software such as MS/Word, Word Perfect and Quatro Pro. Able and willing to work later than normal working hours on a regular basis. 2) Six years secretarial/administrative experience including at least two years as personal assistant or senior secretary to a senior executive in a large commercial or industrial organisation. 3) Fluency in spoken and written English. Qualified candidates may be invited for tests and interviews.

**REMUNERATION:** The post is graded at level 11 and carries a monthly Base Salary starting from \$718.40. **APPLICATIONS:** For applicants selected from outside Gaza, a Special Expatriate Allowance will be payable. Applications quoting (AVN/21/98) may be sent by mail or fax before 21 January 1999 to: Recruitment Officer, UNRWA HQ Gaza City, P.O. Box 371, Gaza City. Fax No. + 972 7 6777 555, from where additional information can be requested.

## OROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR DECEMBER, WEDNESDAY 30, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You learned something recently that could help you advance in your career. Now, all you have to do is find a way to put it to good use. Your team will support you, and might even open some doors for you. Your advantage is that you're not all alone in this endeavour. You've got others backing you up, so use them.

**Taurus:** (April 20 to May 20) You best source of income right now could be a foreigner you care about, and an older person you respect. This is good, because you have lots of things to buy. You're setting up your home just the way you want it. There's a bit of urgency, but that's empowering. You'll have to get up off the couch and actually make the changes.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Finally, you get breakthrough you've been hoping for, wishing for, but mostly working for by doing what needed to be done. Now it looks like you've got the admiration of friends, relatives and enemies alike. The overall conclusion they're coming to is that you're a person who can be counted on, and that feels really good.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) There's a lot of talk going around. Some of it is favourable and some of it isn't, but it's all interesting. You can get into the game, too, and you should. You know things the others don't. Don't just sit back and think they're going to make the same decisions you would. The chances of that are slim.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You should be in an excellent mood today, and when you're in a good mood, everybody's in a good mood. There's work to do, but it's work you enjoy and it looks like everyone else is feeling rather goofy, too. Watch out for accidents. Somebody who's not paying attention could crash into somebody else who's not paying attention.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 21) Today and tomorrow are your best days this week for making changes. They're also the times you're most likely to be called on to put in corrections. It won't be from mistakes you've made, but other people may have goofed up here and there. You have a good eye for untangling messes, that's for sure. Let your talent shine.

**LIBRA:** (September 22 to October 21) Today, the assignment is teaching and learning. When you discuss your life and how you learned to do something you couldn't do before, it helps other people with the same sort of problem. You can't solve everybody's problems, of course, but you can show them how you did it for yourself, in words they can understand.

**SCORPIO:** (October 22 to November 21) With just a little wheeling and dealing, you can get something you want for your home or somebody who lives there. Communication is definitely required, both by you and by the other person. Don't be alarmed if what you really think comes blurring out, even when you didn't mean to say it. Today, that'll work out just fine.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Looks like an attractive person wants to drag you off on a midweek adventure, and why not? You've put up with enough for the last few days to make a little interlude look all the more delicious. Don't do anything that would get you into trouble or pack on too many calories.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) If you push hard, you might get everything done before New Year's Day, and take the day off. You've had your head buried in your job so long you probably don't know what it looks like out in the real world. You could find out soon. Meanwhile, put that nose back to the grindstone a little longer. Knowing it won't be forever helps.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Your problem is in trying to be two places at the same time. You're so popular, and it's difficult for you to turn anybody down. You know you love them all and wish you could be wherever they want you to be. Right now, that's not possible. You'll have to choose, or else do some fancy dancing.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You can bet your plans are going to go astray. People who are supposed to be somewhere at a certain time will be late, or early. If you go to the docks because your ship has come in, the shipment will be at the airport. No need to stress. The good news is that there's going to be a surprise, and it's in your favour.

Birth Stone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

## Halliburton to cut 2,750 jobs

DALLAS, Texas (AFP)

Halliburton, the largest U.S. oil services company, will cut an additional 2,750 employees from its energy services group as a result of low crude oil prices, the group said Tuesday.

The reduction in employment is in response to the business impact of low crude oil prices and oil customers' plans to sharply reduce spending in 1999, Halliburton said.

"A number of customers, for whom the company is working on projects in the North Sea, North Africa and Latin America, have been negatively impacted by the current low oil price environment," Halliburton said.

"As a result, these customers have restricted their capital spending and they have recently placed extraordinary pressure on the project claims for additional cost incurred by the company," it added.

The cuts will force the company to take a \$35 million pre-tax charge, or five cents per diluted share, in the fourth quarter.

A.F.M. TRADE Tuesday, 29-12-98			
ACCESS 4646868			
Company	Open	Close	Change
BANKS			
ARAB BK	209.500	210.000	+0.24%
ARAB BK	1.800	1.850	+3.13%
CAIRO AMMAN BK	2.750	2.850	+3.64%
BNL OF JO	1.580	1.570	-0.63%
UNION EAST BK	1.050	1.050	0.00%
THE HOUSING BK	2.720	2.760	+1.47%
JO. GULF BK	0.690	0.700	+1.45%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.870	1.850	-0.60%
JO. INVEST. BK	0.680	0.680	0.00%
JO. INVEST. BK	0.680	0.680	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.570	0.570	0.00%
BANKS INDEX	275.600	point =	+0.37%
INSURANCE			
ARAB INS	1.920	1.900	-1.04%
JO. GULF INS	1.550	1.460	-5.81%
ARAB UNION INT'L INS	1.720	1.760	+2.33%
AL-NISR INS	2.850	2.850	0.00%
INSURANCE INDEX	124.000	point =	+0.65%
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.470	1.470	0.00%
SHIPPING LINES	1.060	1.010	-4.72%
JO. INT'L TRADING CENT	0.290	0.280	-3.45%
COMMODITIES	1.740	1.740	0.00%
AL-CARCA FOR EDU	0.820	0.830	+1.19%
ARAB INT'L FOR INVS & E	1.910	1.910	0.00%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.100	1.080	-0.91%
UNITED FOR FINANCIAL INV	1.110	1.110	0.00%
SERVICES INDEX	105.720	point =	-0.26%
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	3.000	3.030	+1.00%
PHOSPHATE	1.510	1.500	-0.66%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.200	10.140	-0.59%
TINE IND. COMM & AGRICU	1.210	1.270	+4.96%
PARAD PHARMACEUTICAL	2.540	2.550	+0.39%
CERAMIC IND	1.100	1.100	0.00%
TORACCO & CIGARET	1.200	1.210	+0.83%
JO. PIPES	1.080	1.080	0.00%
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGE	0.520	0.520	0.00%
PARA	4.900	5.050	+3.06%
DAR AL DAWA	0.550	0.540	-1.82%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	1.020	0.990	-2.94%
JO. STEEL	1.240	1.210	-2.42%
CHILDLINE	0.390	0.390	0.00%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.390	0.390	0.00%
NTL IND	0.350	0.360	+2.86%
PETRO-CHEMICAL	0.330	0.320	-3.03%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1.500	1.500	0.00%
GENERAL INVS	2.150	2.100	-2.33%
ITIL CABLE	0.850	0.840	-1.18%
SULPHO-CHEMICALS	0.380	0.370	-2.63%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM	1.180	1.190	+0.85%
ZAT	1.280	1.240	-3.13%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.620	0.620	0.00%
IND. RESOURCES	0.450	0.440	-2.22%
NEW CAPLES	0.610	0.610	0.00%
ITIL ALUMINIUM	0.690	0.690	0.00%
INDUSTRY INDEX	75.210	point =	+0.22%
PARALLEL			
JO. TRADING FACILITIES	0.440	0.430	-2.27%
UNION INVS. CORP	0.690	0.690	0.00%
AL. EKAL	0.780	0.780	0.00%
ADVANCED PHAR	0.560	0.550	-1.79%
AL. SHARG	0.850	1.000	+1.76%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.390	0.370	-5.13%
AL. DAWLAW	0.560	0.550	-1.79%
OPTICAL & AUDIO	0.500	0.470	-6.00%
READY MIX CONCRETE	0.320	0.320	0.00%
NAMCO	0.280	0.280	0.00%
TEXTILE & PLASTIC	0.230	0.220	-4.35%
(MIDDLE EAST PHARM)	0.570	0.580	+1.75%
AL. HAD	0.560	0.550	-1.79%
UNION ENG. IND	0.290	0.290	0.00%
ITIL CERAMIC	0.390	0.380	-2.56%
ITIL TEXTILE MANU	0.190	0.200	+5.26%
ITIL POLYESTER	0.540	0.540	0.00%
MUTUAL DAR	0.680	0.680	0.00%
GRAND INDEX	156.79	point =	+0.30%

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## Sydney-to-Hobart race

## No joy in Hobart when winner crosses finish line

HOBART, Australia (AP) — There was more uneasy silence than celebration, more tears than smiles. No cannons blasting, no champagne corks popping.

Sayonara, 80 feet of gleaming white carbon fiber, sailed serenely up the Derwent River on Tuesday morning in a pleasant southerly to cross the line a convincing winner of the 54th Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race.

On board the world maxi champion with the professional sailors were some of the world's movers and shakers — men who exercise enormous power in human affairs.

Behind them in aching seas were the victims of nature at its most ferocious. Abandoned hulks of once-proud yachts, one a floating coffin. Five, almost certainly six, dead; families grieving on both ends of the world.

There was an eerie atmosphere as Sayonara sailed in, for everyone knew this was no ordinary yacht race.

Normally the finish of Australia's premier blue-water classic is a time for celebration.

On Tuesday, the spectator fleet was smaller and the crowds around Constitution Dock thinner than usual.



Larry Ellison skipper of American maxi yacht Sayonara, waves to the docks as he finishes with line honours in the yachting classic The Sydney to Hobart, in Hobart Harbour, Tasmania, Tuesday. The race was marred by atrocious conditions claiming the lives of at least five yachtsmen (AP photo)

The traditional three cheers for the winner were hesitant. The planned fireworks, cannon and champagne reception were canceled. The trophy presentation was put back for five days. There was no big speech from Sayonara's owner and

skipper Larry Ellison. Ellison, 54, is the billionaire head of the American software giant Oracle with a reputation for being determined to win in sport and business.

But it was a different Ellison on Tuesday.

"It wasn't a race," he said. "We were not focused on a race, we were focused on getting this boat here in one piece and every one of the crew here."

As he looked back on the storms and the deaths, he said:

"This is not what it's supposed to be about. Difficult, yes. Dangerous, no. Life-threatening, definitely not."

Ellison admitted he didn't know whether he'd go ocean-racing again.

"I may reassess my attitude," he said. "It will take a little time to place this in perspective."

He's promised to join American media mogul Ted Turner in next year's Fastnet — the 20th anniversary of the Fastnet that claimed 19 lives.

"Ted did the Fastnet in '79," Ellison said. "I want to talk to him about that. He didn't race much after that."

"Right now I'm not anxious to go back and do another ocean race."

## Facts about the Sydney to Hobart yacht race

HOBART (AFP) — The prestigious Sydney to Hobart yacht race is renowned for uncertain weather that can bring southwesterly fronts howling through the Bass Strait, forcing huge seas and winds of 60 knots-plus.

The relatively shallow Strait, a treacherous stretch of water that separates mainland Australia from the island state of Tasmania, is known for its short, steep seas and strong currents.

There has hardly been a race in its 54-year history that has not experienced a radical change in wind direction and strength, race organisers say.

• **Course:** The Sydney to Hobart yacht race covers 630 nautical miles, stretching from Sydney harbour down mainland Australia's east coast, across the eastern edge of Bass Strait, down the Tasmanian east coast and up the Derwent River to the city of Hobart.

• **Crews:** Each yacht must be crewed by a minimum of six experienced ocean racers aged 18 or more years. No restrictions on age and experience exist for extra crew.

• **History:** 1945 — A group of Sydney yachtsmen plan a post-World War II cruise to Hobart. Nine yachts start the race on Boxing Day, battling stormy weather to reach the finish.

Winner of line and handicap honours is Rani, a 39-foot yacht owned and sailed by Royal Navy officer. Captain John Illingworth. Her recorded time was six days, 14 hours and 22 minutes.

1984 — The race experiences one of its worst years with 104 out of 150 yachts retiring after gale force southerly winds blew up off the New South Wales south coast. The race's first recorded death by misadventure occurs when a 72-year-old yachtsman is washed overboard and presumed drowned.

1989 — A 58-year-old man dies from head injuries on Flying Colours after a 45-knot gale off the southern New South Wales coast snaps the yacht's mast.

1993 — Also remembered as a bad year with only 38 yachts out of 110 competitors finishing after a series of southwesterly and southerly fronts, with gusts of up to 70 knots, hit the competitors.

Two yachts are abandoned by their crews and sink. The skipper of another yacht is washed overboard and spends five hours in treacherous seas before being picked up.

1994 — A record 371 starters compete in the 50th race, including two yachts that sailed in the inaugural race. Two crew from the first race also sail. 308 yachts finish.

1996 — American-designed, Australian-built, German-owned yacht Morning Glory breaks line honours record with a time of two days, 14 hours, seven minutes and 10 seconds.

1998 — Six dead as severe seas force at least 58 retirements from 115 starters.

## Africa experiences magic and misery on the world stage

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — The wizardry of Moroccan Mustapha Hadji and Nigerian Jay Jay Okocha and the goals of Egyptian Hossam Hassan and South African Benni McCarthy illuminated a year when Africa promised more than it achieved.

Pony-tailed midfielder Hadji scored a memorable World Cup goal against Norway and his country were deprived of a place in the second round when the Scandinavians stunned defending champions Brazil.

Okocha may have failed to score at the international showpiece in France, but his artistry when in possession suggested magnets were attached to the soles of his boots. Nigeria were the only African challengers to reach the knockout phase and amateurish defending led to a 4-1 hiding from an unsung Danish side inspired by brothers Brian and Michael Laudrup.

A victory over Chile would have taken Cameroon through, but they had two goals disallowed and two players sent off during a 1-1 deadlock and joined Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia on early flights home.

South Africa clung to a slender lifeline entering the final group matches only to concede two penalties against Saudi Arabia before Shaun Bartlett levelled from another spot kick in the last minute.

Tunisia reserved their best form for a 1-1 draw with Romania after they had fired Franco-Pole coach Henri Kasperczak following losses against England and Colombia.

Late coaching appointments contributed to a disappointing showing by Africa with Cameroon, Nigeria and South Africa enlisting foreigners just months before France 98.

Only Frenchman Henri Michel remains of the five World Cup coaches and his three years in charge of Morocco has seen them top the monthly rankings of world governing body FIFA throughout this year.

Tunisia, South Africa, African champions Egypt, Zambia, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo completed the official top 10. Add Nigeria and the elite is complete.

Egypt were surprise winners of a record-equaling fourth African Nations Cup title after outplaying title holders South Africa

2-0 in a final that ceased to be a contest just 12 minutes into the first half.

An Ahmed Hassan shot was deflected into the net before many spectators had settled in their seats and Tarek Mustapha then scored off a craftily conceived free kick.

DR Congo, dismissed as also-rans before the tournament because of woeful preparations, snatched third place from hosts Burkina Faso in a penalty shootout after wiping out a 4-1 deficit with four minutes left.

Cameroon, Morocco and Tunisia made quarter-final exits and four-time champions Ghana did not even get that far, finishing third behind Tunisia and DR Congo in a first-round pool.

Hassan, a shaven-haired 32-year-old striker from crack Cairo club Al Ahly, and 20-year-old McCarthy, shared the individual glory with seven goals each, although both were closely marked in the final.

Cape Town-born McCarthy, who shared boots with his brother as a teenager due to poverty, looks set for a bright future with Dutch club Ajax.

Polls by the African Football Confederation and Afrique Football magazine to discover the stars of the year produced identical results with Hadji winning from Okocha, Nigerian Sunday Oliseh, Hassan and McCarthy.

Midfielders Abedi Pele of Ghana and Kalusha Bwalya of Zambia retired from international football after the Nations Cup having graced the game for more than a decade.

Cote d'Ivoire club ASEC turned 50 in style by winning the Champions League for the first time with a 4-2 home win over surprise packets Dynamos from Zimbabwe.

Tunisian teams claimed the other prizes with Esperance overcoming Primeiro Agosto of Angola in the Cup Winners Cup to complete a clean sweep of African titles while CS Sfaxien dominated Jeanne d'Arc of Senegal in the CAF Cup.

At regional level, Zambia retained the Southern Africa title and Shooting Stars of Nigeria and Rayon Sport of Rwanda won club events in West and East Africa.

## French World Cup stars told ... pull your socks up

MONACO (AFP) —

Monaco president Jean-Louis Campora on Tuesday urged young strikers and French World Cup stars Thierry Henry and David Trezeguet to pull their socks up, saying he was disappointed in their showing this season.

"I am very struck by their performances. The aftermath of the World Cup has had a very negative psychological effect on their spirit and our young internationals have experienced a slump in their form following their success," Campora told Nice-Matin daily.

Monaco have had a poor season and are currently seventh in the table, two years after powering to the championship just as Henry and Trezeguet began to break through the ranks. Last month they slid out of the UEFA Cup to near-neighbours and league leaders

Marseille.

Both youngsters made impressive contributions to France's World Cup win and Henry scored three goals along the way.

But both have since struggled to find their form and Henry in particular has been hampered by injury, missing several games with a back complaint.

"I am convinced they have been influenced by ... their entourage, who obviously want to profit from their glory but who are acting as parasites on them," Campora said.

He added that neither player was for sale.

"They can either get their act together or go and play in the reserves. Monaco is a solid club which can survive coming tenth. They can't if they want to go and put themselves in the shop window for the big clubs," said Campora, who suggested it

was time for both to pull their weight.

In contrast Campora had nothing but praise for French international keeper Fabien Barthez, "exemplary in his conduct and spirit."

Barthez recently admitted he had not been pleased with his own form but said it was normal to experience a downturn after the euphoria of the World Cup and such a long season.

Campora also had a kind word for coach Jean Tigana, whom Monaco held to his contract in the summer despite his status as favourite to succeed Aime Jacquet as French national coach.

"He has character and he knows how to deal with conflict. His methods are good. With Tigana we were champions and twice reached European semi-finals."

## Testud preparing for Hopman Cup

PERTH (AFP) —

Leading French tennis player Sandrine Testud began Tuesday to prepare for her debut in the nine-nation Hopman Cup mixed teams tournament starting here Saturday.

Testud, 26, who is ranked 14th in the world, will partner Guillaume Raoux, ranked 55, in the annual event at Burswood Dome.

The French pair were invited to take part in the competition, now in its eleventh year, after Testud asked tournament director Paul McNamee if she could be included.

"This is different from a normal tournament, and I'm especially looking forward to playing with Guillaume in the mixed doubles," Testud said Tuesday.

Under the Hopman Cup format, each player takes part in a singles clash before the pair team up in a novel mixed doubles hit-out.

To qualify for the main draw, Testud and

Raoux must first beat the Zimbabwe pair, Wayne and Cara Black, in a play-off Saturday.

Testud, who arrived here Sunday, said the Zimbabwe team would be hard to beat.

"They are both playing very well and they play good doubles," she said. "It will be my first match for a few weeks and it will not be easy to get past Zimbabwe."

"I need to get into the main draw so I can play a few matches and sharpen my game for the Australian Open later in January."

If they eliminate Zimbabwe, the French pair will move into Group A, meeting Spain's Carlos Moya and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario next Monday, South Africa's Wayne Ferreira and Amanda Coetzer Tuesday and Australia's Mark Philippoussis and Jelena Dokic on Thursday.

HOBART (AFP) — Sydney-to-Hobart race officials defended themselves Tuesday from sharp criticism over the disastrous race that claimed six lives despite brave rescue efforts that saved more than 50 yachtsmen.

The fleet, which left Sydney in bright sunshine on Saturday, was torn apart the next day by a storm that forced nearly half the 115 starters in the bluewater classic to retire in atrocious conditions.

American billionaire Larry Ellison lashed out at officials after his 80-foot (24-metre) maxi yacht Sayonara won the race which became the worst yachting disaster for a decade.

"Everyone lines up for this race expecting a difficult race but no one expects a dangerous race," he said. "You know this is not what this is supposed to be about ... Difficult yes, dangerous no, life-threatening definitely not. And I think a lot of us are upset."

"We were learning of people dying. That's not what this is supposed to be about."

Hugo van Kretschmar, Commodore of the race organisers, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA), promised a review that would cover all aspects of the way the race was conducted and try to improve safety standards.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority, which coordinated the massive search and rescue operation for stricken yachts and missing crew, has agreed to help.

British authorities who inquired into the 1979 Fastnet Race in the Irish Sea, yachting's worst tragedy where 19 sailors died, would also be consulted.

Van Kretschmar, who



With up to six sailors including Briton Glyn Charles, shown in this undated file picture, feared drowned, the Sydney to Hobart race is the worst tragedy to hit the yachting world since the 1979 Fastnet disaster. Rescuers were battling against fading light and massive waves as time appeared to be running out in the search for missing British Olympic sailor Glyn Charles (AFP photo)

sailed in the 1979 race, said there were similarities between the two disasters. In both cases the problems arose from the weather turning suddenly and unexpectedly worse.

"The unsinkable and uncontrollable yacht, like the Titanic, doesn't exist," van Kretschmar said. "But we must learn from this experience and seek to make the sport safer."

Van Kretschmar said there was a case for more frequent and comprehensive weather reports but he was opposed

spokesman Rick Burleigh supported him.

"In the end, it's the skipper's responsibility if he wants to race or not," he said.

Burleigh confirmed four yachtsmen were dead and two were missing presumed dead, including British Olympic sailor Glyn Charles.

Three of the dead were from the oldest yacht, the 56-year-old sloop Winston Churchill which entered the inaugural race. The Sydney-Hobart had previously seen only two deaths in its 54-year history.

Burleigh said the toll could have been far worse but for the bravery of the volunteer charter aircraft pilots and navy helicopter crews who snatched 56 crew from the jaws of death.

"They've done a marvelous job in extremely dangerous conditions," he said.

Transport Minister John Anderson added: "In one of the darkest periods in Australian yachting history, there have been some moments of incredible heroism."

Roger Badham, a professional forecaster for yachtsmen, said he was amazed so many yachts had survived the storm.

"It was definitely going to occur, it was just a matter to determine where it would happen," he said.

"On the day of the race, just after it started, I saw the next global prediction and I said, 'This is Armageddon.'"

Richard Winning, owner and skipper of the ill-fated Winston Churchill which lost three crew, vowed never to sail again.

The 48-year-old was winched by helicopter with three other survivors from a liferaft late Monday, about 24 hours after his yacht sank in mountainous seas.

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## Tarawneh reviews 9th Pan-Arab Games' preparations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh Tuesday chaired a meeting for the Higher Ministerial Committee in charge of following up on preparations for the 9th Arab Games, set to be held in Amman between Aug. 15 and August 31, 1999.

Tarawneh stressed the importance of providing the necessary facilities to ensure the success of this important Arab sports event.

Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sata'an Al Hassan, who attended the meeting, said Tarawneh was briefed on the tournament's budget, expenditure of Jordanian sports federations, maintenance work being carried out in sports installations and facilities, media coverage and promotion for the tournament.

The minister stressed the importance of providing all the means to turn this event into a real success, saying the games had received special attention from His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

Minister Al Hassan said preparations were progressing well in terms of providing the necessary facilities for training and for the Games.

He voiced hope that all installations and facilities will be ready for the tournament at least two months before it is set to open.

He referred to an inspection visit by a ministerial Arab committee to Jordan late this year, saying that the committee will meet in Algiers on Feb. 20 to discuss tournament-related issues. The committee may tour Arab countries to seek financial support for the tournament.

Twenty-five sport facilities, including three sport cities, have been finalised to host the Games, which will include 27 events for men and 19 for women.

More than 15 Arab countries and over 3,000 athletes and officials are expected to participate in the event. Gearing up the country's facilities to accommodate the mega event will prove to be a big challenge, officials have said.

Since the Arab Sports Federation (ASF) advanced the date of the upcoming Games to 1999 instead of 2001, the Council of Arab Sports Ministers increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update sports facilities.

Aid from the Arab League has been raised to \$200,000 while the Council of Arab Ministers will grant \$1 million instead of \$700,000.

Additional sponsorship for Jordan's bid will be garnered through lowering the 50 per cent ASF margin of profit on promotion and television coverage.

Jordan will cover the remaining costs, expected to reach JD18 million covering the construction of a multi-purpose indoor stadium with a capacity for 7,000 spectators, an Olympic-size swimming pool, a track and field stadium, in addition to acquiring and upgrading facilities with electronic timing machines.

The rest of the venues will be utilised at private universities and educational institutions that have already expressed readiness to host some of the events.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in construction of sport facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

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The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in construction of sport facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics.

## Taylor leads playoff-bound Jaguars past Pittsburgh

JACKSONVILLE (AFP) — Fred Taylor scored two touchdowns and the playoff-bound Jacksonville Jaguars beat Pittsburgh 21-3 here Monday in the final game of American football's regular season.

The Jaguars, who finished 11-5, had already clinched the AFC Central division title and a playoff berth. They will play host to New England on Sunday in a first-round National Football League playoff game.

"We got a little confidence going into the playoffs," Taylor said. "We came out thinking we could run the ball. They stacked up against the run but we made a few passes and that loosened things up."

Taylor ran 21 times for 71 yards and caught two passes for 21 yards, reaching the end zone on a run and a pass play against the Steelers, who finished the season 7-9.

Next weekend's other first-round playoff games find Buffalo at Miami and Arizona at Dallas on Saturday and Green Bay at San Francisco on Sunday, Minnesota, Denver, Atlanta and the New York Jets have first-round byes.

Seattle's Dennis Erickson, Philadelphia's Ray Rhodes, Chicago's Dave Wannstedt, Don Capers of Carolina and Baltimore's Ted Marchibroda were all shown the door three days after Christmas.

Seattle went 8-8, Baltimore finished 6-10 while Carolina and Chicago were 4-12 and Philadelphia ended 3-13.

"It's part of the business," said Rhodes, whose Eagles barely averaged an NFL-low 10 points a game and had their worst record since 1972. Rhodes was 29-34 with one drawn in four seasons at Philadelphia.

"I'm not really sad," said 67-year-old Marchibroda, who finished 16-31 with one drawn in three seasons with the Ravens. "We gave it the good fight. Things don't always turn out the way you want."

Carolina suffered nine of 12 defeats by seven or fewer points and reached a low when linebacker Kevin Greene attacked an assistant coach during an argument at a game.

"There have obviously been a lot of distractions, a lot of things that could take this team off course," Capers said.

Cincinnati coach Bruce Coslet was retained despite the Bengals' 3-13 record, which matched Philadelphia and Indianapolis for worst in the NFL. Coslet is 17-24 with Cincinnati and under contract for two more years.

Also escaping the ax was Washington's Norv Turner, despite the Redskins' 6-10 finish and fifth year out of the playoffs in Turner's five seasons since arriving from the Dallas Cowboys' staff.

"I'm not going to spend a lot of time worrying about it," said Turner, whose status might be aided by the impending sale of the Redskins in bidding that could reach \$700 million.

Turkey's Sukur considers Juventus offer

ANKARA (AP) — Turkish striker Hakan Sukur is considering a return to Turin — not with his former club Torino but with cross-town rival Juventus.

"I received an offer from Juventus," the Galatasaray star told the private NTV television Tuesday, confirming news reports that Juve had offered \$12 to \$15 million for the transfer. "I will make my decision in a few days."

Sukur, who had a brief stint with Torino three years ago, is seeking a four-year, \$8 million contract with Juventus, the sports daily Foto Mac said Tuesday.

Despite opposition from coach Fatih Terim, the Galatasaray board seems willing to let Sukur go to help ease the club's financial crisis.

Galatasaray urgently needs \$7 million to buy an alcohol factory to raise revenue for the club, according to the daily paper Turkiye. The club is reportedly having difficulties in paying the salaries of some players.

Galatasaray's financial needs also stem from the recent approval of a \$122 million renovation project of the club's Ali Sami Yen stadium.

Sukur said Galatasaray's economic hardships would affect his decision. He said he would also take into account the current diplomatic rift between Italy and Turkey over Rome's refusal to extradite Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Ocalan's rebels have been fighting for autonomy in south-eastern Turkey. The conflict has claimed some 37,000 lives since 1984.

The tension between Italy and Turkey overshadowed a Championship League game between Juventus and Galatasaray earlier this month. The game, postponed by a week for fear of fan violence, ended in a 1-1 draw amid tight security in Istanbul on Dec. 2.

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## McGwire named AP Athlete of the Year

NEW YORK (AP) — Mark McGwire's home runs did more than win games for the St. Louis Cardinals. Those 70 big swings won back fans for the whole sport.

For setting a record that may outlast him, and for helping save the game of baseball, Big Mac was picked Monday as The Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year.

"It's America's pastime. And if I took one person to help get it back on the map, and people say it's me, that's great," McGwire said.

In a season considered by many to be the greatest ever, the 6-foot-5 redhead stood tall of them all. From his grand slam on opening day to No. 70 on his final swing, McGwire captivated the nation.

"Did he hit one?" became the daily buzzwords among millions of fans and nonfans alike, especially as his river-race with Sammy Sosa heated up near the end of the season.

And then came the best snapshot of them all: the night he hit No. 62 in St. Louis to break Roger Maris' 37-year-old record.

After rounding the bases, an exuberant McGwire lifted his son, Matt, in a bear hug, embraced Sosa, whose Chicago Cubs happened to be playing against him, and then saluted the Maris family that was on hand to witness history.

That September evening at Busch Stadium, with fireworks exploding overhead and cheers coming from all around the globe, it seemed like baseball had — at last — broken free from its post-strike problems.

McGwire easily won the Male Athlete of the Year award with 332 points. Sosa was second with 177 in the annual voting by AP member newspapers and broadcast outlets. Ten points are allotted for every first-place vote, nine for second and so on.

Running back Terrell Davis of the Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos was third with 63 points. Michael Jordan of the NBA champion Chicago Bulls was next with 54, followed by Broncos quarterback John Elway (50) and NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon (42).

This marked the second straight time the AP's top male athlete was the subject of the AP's Story of the Year. In 1997, Tiger Woods won the individual award while his victory in the Masters earned Story of the Year honours.

From the day he homered in the Cardinals' spring training opener to the night he scooped up a foul ball as a guest in a front-row box at the final game of the World Series, McGwire was the focus of baseball.

The slugging first baseman was expected to challenge Maris' 1961 mark of 61, especially because this was an expansion season, when offensive numbers tend to get out of whack.

McGwire delivered with 29,598 feet worth of longballs, most of them moonshots far beyond the fences. He became the first player to hit at least 50 home runs in three straight seasons.

McGwire punctuated each drive with his signature — a fake punch to the gut of teammates.

"Americans love power," McGwire said. "Big cars. Big trucks. Big people. Baseball fans have always been drawn to the home run and the guy throwing close to 100 mph."

McGwire finished with 147 RBIs and an NL-record 162 walks. He led the majors in slugging percentage (.752) and on-base percentage (.470) and batted .299.

Sosa, however, won the NL MVP award when the Cubs won the wild-card spot while the Cardinals did not make the playoffs.

McGwire's shots earned him standing ovations in opposing ballparks. Along the way, there were a few humps.

In early June, back spasms caused him to miss a few games and raised concern that his history of injuries would stall his bid.

Later, with so much attention put on his monstrous batting practice shows, he said he felt like "a caged animal" and said he might cut down his BP sessions.

The biggest controversy of all came in August when the AP reported that he used androstenedione, an over-the-counter muscle-building supplement that is banned by the NFL, Olympics and NCAA.

"Everybody that I know in the game of baseball uses the same stuff I use," McGwire said.

Then on Sept. 8, in the Cardinals' 145th game, Big Mac broke the homer mark — without a doubt or the kind of asterisk that dogged Maris when he passed Babe Ruth.

No. 62 was a line drive off the Cubs' Steve Trachsel that barely made it over the left-field fence. At 341 feet, it was McGwire's shortest homer of the season.

McGwire was so excited he ran past first and had to retouch the bag. He got handshakes and pats from every Chicago infielder, then saved his biggest celebration for his 10-year-old baby son at home plate; for Sosa, who jogged in from right field; and for the Maris family.

"I have been talking about this since January," McGwire said. "I can honestly say I did it."

Sosa eventually tied McGwire at 66 home runs. McGwire, however, won the race by finishing his season with a pair of two-homer games. His shot off Montreal's Carl Pavano in the seventh inning on the last day gave him the beyond-belief total of 70.

"I think it will stand for a while," McGwire said. "Will it be broken someday? It could be. Will I be alive? Possibly."

## AP Athlete of the Year votes

Voting based on a 3-2-1 point system (first place votes in parentheses):

### Male Athlete of the Year

Player	Pts
Mark McGwire (101)	332
Sammy Sosa (16)	177
Terrell Davis (10)	63
Michael Jordan (4)	54
John Elway (3)	50
Jeff Gordon (1)	42
Ricky Williams (1)	37
Dominik Hasek (4)	36
Mark O'Meara (1)	23
Oscar De La Hoya (2)	11

### Female Athlete of the Year

Se Ri Pak (19)	156
Chamique Holdstock (27)	142
Tara Lipinski (21)	105
Marion Jones (24)	101
Lindsay Davenport (15)	85
Cynthia Cooper (10)	55
Martina Hingis (8)	49
Picabo Street (5)	45
Michelle Kwan (7)	37
Ila Borders (5)	27

Others receiving votes: Brett Favre (2) 9; Pete Sampras (1) 8; Roger Clemens (1) 8; Barry Sanders (6); Randy Moss (1) 5; Bjorn Dahlie 4; Steve Yzerman 4; Haile Gebrselassie (1) 3; Evander Holyfield 2; Tom Glavine 2; Kobe Bryant 2; Paul Tergat 2; Tiger Woods 2; Alex Zanardi 2; Zinedine Zidane 1; Juan Gonzalez 1; Doug Flutie 1; Hermann Maier 1; Cobi Jones 1; Hicham El Guerrouj 1; Mika Hakkinen 1; Casey Martin 1; Marco Pantani 1; David Wells 1.

Others receiving votes: Annika Sorenstam (1) 18; Venus Williams (1) 16; Karyn Bye (1) 14; Cammi Granato (2) 6; Natalie Williams 4; Chris Witty 4; Anna Kournikova (1) 3; Nikki McCray 3; 1998 U.S. women's hockey team 2; Mia Hamm 2; Nykesha Sales 2; Gabriela Szabo 2; Sylvia Crawley 1; Valerie Still 1; Pat Summitt 1; Dominique Moceanu 1.

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## Gullit fuming as Villa take lead

LONDON (AFP) — Newcastle's Dutch manager Ruud Gullit was left fuming after his side squandered a 2-0 second-half lead to lose 4-2 in a pulsating English Premiership match at Liverpool on Monday.

Aston Villa returned to the top of the table, opening out a three-point lead over Chelsea, thanks to Ugo Ehiogu's late winner in the 2-1 home victory over 10-man Sheffield Wednesday but it was the Arsenal goal blitz which grabbed the attention on a hectic day in England's top flight.

Gullit was furious after seeing German midfielder Dietmar Hamann sent off in the 30th minute on Merseyside as Newcastle succumbed to a late Liverpool charge.

The visitors had looked comfortable when Peruvian Nolberto Solano opened their account in the 29th minute with a deflected shot and then Andreas Andersson coolly rounded David James to double their lead in the 56th minute.

But England striker Michael Owen and German international Karlheinz Riedle completed a stupendous Liverpool comeback by scoring two goals apiece in the last 23 minutes.

Gullit, who has been under fire for spending too much time in his native Holland, refused to criticise referee Stephen Lodge directly after the match but left little doubt that he thought Hamann's sending-off was decisive.

"That is my biggest disappointment after this game. My team played very well...and they worked very hard to get a result out of here. But just to protect myself, I don't want to say anything else about what happened."

"Certain things spoil the rest of the day after we had worked so hard, so good luck to everyone."

Liverpool's joy at an important victory was marred by an ankle injury to England midfielder Steve McManaman who was stretchered off after being fouled by Hamann.

McManaman, who has battled back from six

weeks out with an Achilles problem, is now likely to be out for at least two weeks.

"It is a bad injury for Steve," said Liverpool's French manager Gerard Houllier.

"It is nothing to do with his previous injury, but his ankle is twisted and swollen and he will be out for at least a fortnight," he added.

Nonetheless the win was a welcome boost to the Merseysiders, who have been dogged by inconsistency and lurid weekend reports concerning the antics of the players at the club's Christmas party.

Liverpool have 31 points, eight less than leaders Villa, while second-placed Chelsea (36) play host to Manchester United (34) on Tuesday. Arsenal moved up to third on 35 points after winning 1-0 at Charlton despite having headed Frenchman Patrick Vieira sent off.

Villa, who lost controversially to Blackburn on Saturday, got back on track as Ehiogu scored an 85th-minute winner from a corner after a valiant display from visiting Sheffield Wednesday, reduced to 10 men when Dejan Stefanovic was sent off for a second bookable offence in the 30th minute.

Gareth Southgate had opened the scoring for Villa in the seventh minute before Italian ace Benito Carbone equalised with an overhead effort 60 seconds later.

"We made hard work of it but we kept on going and that's the kind of side we are," Villa manager John Gregory said.

"I thought it wasn't going to be our day but we kept grinding on — and you win titles by grinding out results," he added.

Wednesday manager Danny Wilson described the referee's dismissal of Stefanovic for two bookings as "diabolical".

Arsenal showed real reserves of courage at The Valley as Marc Overmars scored from the penalty spot just minutes after Vieira had been given his marching orders, Arsenal's sixth red card of the season.

Vieira, who was sent off

for elbowing Neil Redfern, was just one of seven players to go into the referee's book as the match became a ragged, ill-tempered affair which also saw Arsenal lose Dutch ace Dennis Bergkamp, who went off injured following a rugged challenge by Eddie Youds.

The defeat meant Charlton have now lost their last seven league games.

In other games Tottenham striker Chris Armstrong notched an 18-minute hat-trick as the Londoners routed Everton 4-1 at home, while Derby beat Middlesbrough 2-1 with only 10 men after Costa Rican Paolo Wanchope was sent off for violent play.

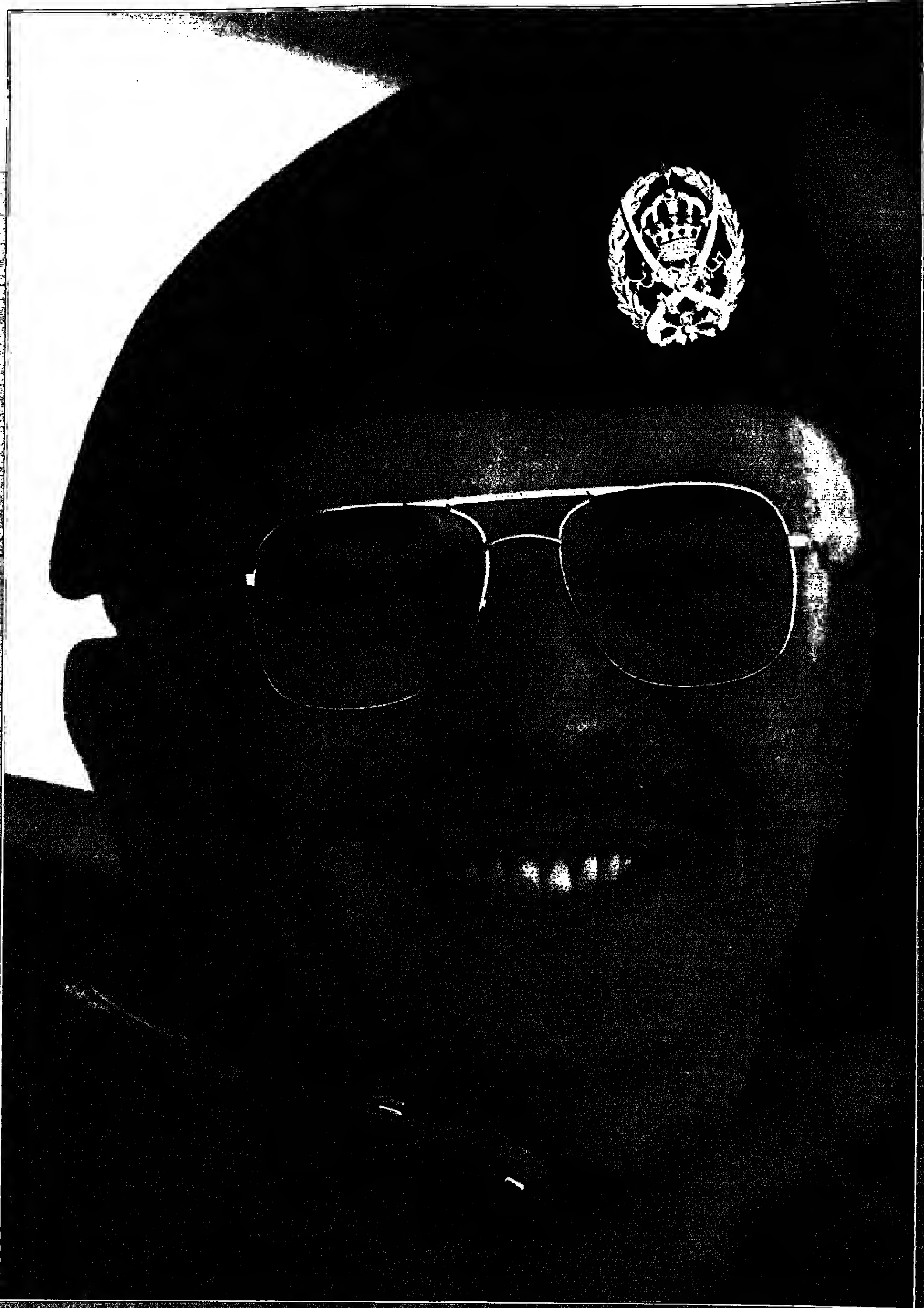
Derby's wantaway striker Dean Sturridge opened the scoring and, though, Mikkel Beck brought the sides level, substitute Jonathan Hunt wrapped up the three points five minutes from time with a header.

West Ham strikers Ian Wright and John Harrison celebrated a return to scoring form as the Hammers beat visiting Coventry City 2-0 while the bottom of the table clash between Southampton and Nottingham Forest ended 1-1, giving Forest sole possession of the worst winless run — 17 matches — in the Premiership's short history.

Saints' Moroccan striker Hassan Kachoulou opened the scoring with a header in the 48th minute but Forest captain Steve Chettle equalised from the penalty spot in the 54th minute.

As elsewhere, festive spirit was in short supply, with Saints' French defender Patrick Colletier sparking a fracas involving 20 players after apparently lashing out at someone on the Forest bench as he tried to retrieve the ball in the second half.





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Israel arrests

HEBRON, West Bank, Dec. 29 (AP) — Israeli soldiers arrested three Palestinian suspects in the south of Hebron on Tuesday. The soldiers said the suspects were involved in a series of attacks on Israeli civilians. The suspects were taken to a military detention facility in Hebron.

June 24 Nur

Israeli soldier killed by friendly fire

TEL AVIV, Dec. 29 (AP) — An Israeli soldier was killed by friendly fire on Tuesday when his unit was engaged in a battle with Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip. The soldier, 24, was part of a unit that was sent to the area to provide security for a group of Israeli civilians. The unit was hit by a mortar shell fired from a Palestinian position. The soldier was killed instantly. The unit was ordered to retreat to a safer position.

New nations take seat in Security Council

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 29 (AP) — The United Nations Security Council on Tuesday elected four new members to replace those whose terms expired. The new members are: Argentina, Bulgaria, China, and India. The election was held in a secret session. The Security Council also elected a new president for the year 1999. The president will be the representative of the United States.

Police catch robber suspect red-handed

MILWAUKEE, Dec. 29 (AP) — Police on Tuesday caught a robber suspect red-handed in a store. The suspect, 24, was caught while he was in the act of robbing a store. The police said the suspect was armed with a knife. The suspect was taken to a police station. The police are looking for other suspects in the robbery.

Canadian couple celebrate 80th wedding anniversary

WINNIPEG, Canada, Dec. 29 (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip congratulated a Canadian couple who celebrated their 80th wedding anniversary on Tuesday. The couple, who have been married for 80 years, were celebrated in a ceremony. The couple have four children and 10 grandchildren.

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